

Hafa Adai!

4 arrested for attempted pipe theft. **PAGE 2**

Fuel adjustment charge remains the same in January. **PAGE 3**

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It's a meteor... It's a missile... It's rocket debris...

**Supposed
meteorite
reportedly
a Chinese
rocket**



Video and frame grab show the blinding light that streaked over the sky of Saipan last Friday night. Credit to Seiji Gonzales, who took the video and has given permission to *Saipan Tribune* to post the video on its website.

SEIJI GONZALES

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

A bright object streaking across the Marianas skies and breaking into pieces before plunging into the sea late Friday night provoked much speculation on social media whether it was a meteor or a missile after

video footage of the event surfaced minutes after the incident, which was seen both on Saipan and in Guam. The CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency now says it may have been debris from a test rocket launched from China.

Video footage surfaced on many social media sites of what appeared to be a bright, meteor-like object entering the Marianas atmosphere at

See ROCKET on Page 4

CCC looks into IPI's dispute with vendors

The Commonwealth Casino Commission is currently investigating disputes between Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC and some of their vendors, based on claims made during the Dec. 19, 2019, commission meeting.

IPI assured yesterday that it

strives to be a responsible corporate citizen of the CNMI.

"We honor our business commitments and financial obligations," it said.

In a commission statement yesterday, it said the commission received a letter on Dec. 19, 2019, that was addressed

See CCC on Page 4

RELATED NEWS

■ Pacific Rim says IPI had committed to paying it in full.

PAGE 6

Propst appeals to CCC to ensure that IPI pays

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-Saipan) appealed Thursday to the Commonwealth Casino Commission to ensure that Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC pay

the CNMI government \$18 million in developer's infra-

structure tax, \$37 million in community benefit fund, and millions of dollars more to its

vendors and former contractors.

"I beg you. You guys have the power. And I believe in you. So please ensure that IPI is paying their bills and paying their vendors," said Propst

during the public comment

See PROPST on Page 4



Propst

'Legislature needs to first amend the smoking law'

By **MARK RABAGO**
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The legal age to buy tobacco has officially been raised from 18 to 21 but it may take some time before the federal law could be enforced in the CNMI, according to Alcohol Beverage and Tobacco Control division director David R. Maratita.

"This mandate [has] yet to apply in the CNMI. The enforcement of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping products, still remains at 18 years old or older, until such time the Legislature amends the CNMI Tobacco Control Act to be consistent with the federal mandate," he said to *Saipan Tribune*.

See SMOKING on Page 4

INSIDE



LOCAL

Mario K. Espeleta wins first place in the Skymark's Night plane contest.

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BUSINESS

School food service company Kalayaan Inc. celebrates its 20th anniversary.

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ASIA

A typhoon in the central Philippines left at least 28 dead and 12 missing.

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Local

4 arrested for attempted pipe theft

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Four men were arrested last Tuesday for attempting to steal galvanized pipes that they have removed from an abandoned hotel in As Lito.

According to a Department of Public Safety statement, DPS received a 911 call at about 2:42pm last Tuesday, reporting a theft-in-progress taking place along Flame Tree

Road, in the village of As Lito. Police intercepted four suspects—Bo Fei Li, Gui Hua Li, Kun Zhai Li, and Zhao Li Fei—who later admitted to removing the galvanized pipes within the abandoned hotel with the intent to take them.

At the scene, police met with the caller who stated that he saw a small group of individuals carrying galvanized pipes away from an abandoned hotel, and toward the

jungle area. The witness then called for police assistance.

Police learned that the witness, a close family member of the owners of the property, noticed while driving by the abandoned hotel a suspicious vehicle make its way toward the back of the abandoned building.

When the caller drove around to the front of the hotel, he heard a loud banging sound coming from the back of the hotel on the lower floor.



Bo Fei Li



Gui Hua Li



Kun Zhai Li



Zhao Li Fei

As the witness walked over to the edge of the building, he looked down and saw two

pickup trucks parked at the bottom and nearby was a man-made trail leading to and from

the abandoned hotel. The caller then rushed to the airport to call for police assistance.

Burglary and theft at a Dandan home

Police officers were doing routine patrol in the village of Dandan last Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2019, at about 8:10pm, when an individual flagged down the officers, saying he wanted to report a burglary and theft incident that occurred at his son's home. Police notified dispatch that they were entertaining a burglary and theft report.

The individual told officers that he went to the home to turn the outside lights on. When the father entered the home, he immediately noticed scattered items throughout the home and saw that one of the doors leading out of the home was slightly open. From there he stepped out the home to call police before flagging down a marked police vehicle conducting routine patrol.

As the owner of the home was making his way back, officers conducted a quick

walk around the parameter and observed a damaged window screen on one side of the home. When the owner of the home returned, he conducted a quick inventory of his belongings. Items reported missing from the residence include: one black colored Hewlett Packard computer with a red colored keyboard, one Apple iPad with a black case, one black-colored Coach men's handbag, and one red iPhone 7.

The Department of Public Safety would like to remind the public to be diligent when purchasing electronics from unknown individuals.

This case remains ongoing. If you have any information on this incident or if you have any knowledge of the whereabouts of the items mentioned above, call 911. If you wish to remain anonymous call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. (PR)


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Fuel adjustment charge remains the same in January

The Fuel Adjustment Charge remains at \$0.18803 per kilowatt-hour for the month of January 2020, according to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. last Friday.

Although there has been a slight increase in the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing from July 2019 to January 2020 as notified by Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc., the increase did not equal or exceed a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC electric kWh rate, which is used to purchase fuel. The second component

is the CUC base rate, which is used to fund operations, projects, and debt service. This base rate has not been increased since April 17, 2014.

CUC is required, pursuant to an order previously issued by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, to adjust (up or down) the FAC pass-through rate when the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing equals or exceeds a 4.5% differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel used in the calculation of the current FAC rate.

CUC first instituted the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause in 2009 to recover fuel and fuel

related costs, a system also used by power providers in Guam and

the U.S. Virgin Islands. In May 2015, the CPUC authorized

CUC to change the name of LEAC to FAC to provide cus-

tomers a more accurate description of the electric rate. (PR)

Alleged overstaying tourist gets 4-day time served sentence

An alleged overstaying tourist who pleaded guilty to producing a CNMI driver's license that he obtained via fraud was sentenced in federal court to four days of time served.

At a sentencing hearing last Friday, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ordered that Guangjian Deng, a Chinese national, to report to an immigration official for deportation proceedings.

He will also be placed on supervised release of one year

and ordered to pay a \$100 special assessment fee.

Deng pleaded guilty last Dec. 16 as part of a plea deal to the charge of conspiracy to unlawfully produce an identification document.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy later recommended that Manglona accept the guilty plea.

Mark Hanson served as court-appointed counsel for Deng. Assistant U.S. attorney

Garth Backe appeared for the U.S. government.

According to the plea agreement, Deng conspired with another person on June 21, 2017, to unlawfully produce an identification document. The other individual would help Deng obtain a CNMI driver's license through the submission of false documents to the CNMI Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Deng illegally obtained a CNMI driver's license on June 21, 2017.

According to Homeland

Security Investigations Task Force officer Cristin Duenas, a check with the DHS system revealed that Deng entered the CNMI on Nov. 19, 2016, and was supposed to stay here only until Dec. 1, 2016. DHS records also showed that Deng was administratively arrested on Feb. 22, 2019, and is currently in removal proceedings.

Duenas said that Deng confessed in an interview that he paid a fellow Chinese national \$1,500 to help him obtain a CNMI driver's license. (Ferdie de la Torre)

OAG Civil Division chief Timmons leaving OAG

Christopher Timmons, the chief of the Office of the Attorney General's Civil Division, is leaving the OAG.

OAG information officer Carla Torres confirmed with *Saipan Tribune* Friday that Timmons is not renewing his contract and that his last day of office is sometime in January 2020.

Deputy attorney general Lillian A. Tenorio will take over Timmons as counsel for Department of Public Safety Commissioner Robert Guerrero in connection with inmate Reynaldo A. Manila's lawsuit against Guerrero and others.

As of press time last night, *Saipan Tribune* was still awaiting Timmons' response on why he is leaving the OAG.



Timmons

Then-assistant attorney general Benjamin Petersburg also left the OAG's Civil Division recently to join the U.S. Attorney's Office in Guam.

Assistant attorney general Jose S. P. Mafnas Jr. will replace Petersburg as the counsel for Department of Corrections officials Jose Pangelinan and Georgia Cabrera in Manila's lawsuit.

Petersburg joined the OAG's Civil Division early this year after partnering with Bruce Berline in 2015.



Petersburgh

(Ferdie de la Torre)

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6HS717	2016 SEDONA	\$4,255	\$12,995
6HS719	2016 SEDONA	\$4,390	\$12,995
7HS779	2017 ACC SOLD	\$3,458	\$9,995
7HS781	2017 ACCENT	\$4,186	\$9,995
7HS784	2017 ACCENT	\$3,987	\$9,995
7HS796	2017 ELANTRA	\$3,845	\$11,995
7HS804	2017 LAN SOLD	\$4,652	\$11,995
7HS806	2017 LANCER	\$5,162	\$11,995

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NMTI expects to get \$10M for a new campus

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Trades Institute is confident that they will be granted \$10 million by the U.S. Economic Development Administration early next year for the construction of a new campus.

In an interview with NMTI chief executive officer Agnes McPhetres, she said NMTI applied for a grant with the EDA worth \$10 million to start the construction of the NMTI campus in Koblerville.

McPhetres reported that she was informed that NMTI is at the top of

the list of recipients and should get word about the funding in February or March of 2020.

McPhetres explained that NMTI wants a new campus because the current one is flood-prone.

"We're going to moving away from here because this is a flood zone. When it rains, we need to watch if the water is coming in. We tried everything we could to get the water out [but it's] not a good facility. It's not adequate for a trade school. It's OK when you're starting off," she said.

McPhetres said that the only requirement that EDA is waiting on is

a report from the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Historic Preservation Office to ensure that no bird breeding grounds are bothered and that there are no burial grounds that could be disturbed.

"We are at the top [of the list] to get [the funding] but there are two requirements that we haven't finished yet...the research on the birds, whether we have birds over there or historical stuff. Those are the things that are kind of holding us up. When the reports are finished, we will submit that to [Washington, D.C.] and the money can be released," she said.

Calm weather expected for the rest of 2019

The National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, anticipates calm weather for the remainder of 2019 going into the New Year.

According to a weather forecast from NWS, breezy days are expected throughout the first week of January 2020.

Today, partly sunny and breezy weather is expected with isolated

showers. Northeast winds are expected to be 20 to 25 mph. Tonight, mostly cloudy and breezy weather is expected with isolated showers. Northeast winds are expected 15 to 25 mph.

On Tuesday, partly sunny and breezy weather is expected with isolated showers. East winds are expected to be 20 to 25 mph. Highs around 86. In the evening, expect mostly

cloudy weather with isolated showers with east winds going up to 10 to 20 mph.

From New Year's Day up until Thursday, expect mostly cloudy weather with isolated showers.

From Thursday night through Sunday, partly cloudy weather is expected with isolated showers. **(Kimberly Bautista)**

ROCKET

From Page 1

around 11pm on Friday before disappearing into the ocean.

The National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, issued a public post at 11:57pm on Friday stating that, based on the videos, it was possibly a meteorite breaking up in the sky as it entered the Marianas' atmosphere.

However, another possibility is that it could be debris from an earlier Chinese rocket or booster test.

According to the CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, Chinese media reported that the entity was a test launch from China and posed no threat to the Marianas.

"Chinese media outlets report that a heavy-lift Long March 5 rocket carrying a test satellite payload blasted off from the Wenchang launch site on the southern island of Hainan at

8:45pm," the report stated.

Homeland Security stated in a press release that the commercial space launch occurred at 10:45 ChST and corresponds with a Federal Aviation Administration Notice to Airmen that was active from 10:43pm until 2:41am.

The atmospheric phenomenon occurred in the vicinity of the Marianas around 11:25pm, corresponding with the time of the NOTAM.

It is now strongly believed that what was seen in the footage littering social media is the leftover debris from the Chinese rocket.

Saipan Tribune correspondent Bea Cabrera said the phenomenon was a once-in-a-lifetime event.

"My husband and I came from a night out with friends and, before going to bed, decided to enjoy the breeze coming from the ocean. Suddenly, a blinding light came out of the night sky behind my husband's head. Directly in our line of sight,

the bright light slowly became visible with a big fireball in front followed by a tail. We were unsure of what it was as we watched it for a good 7 to 8 seconds before the big fireball broke into three parts and then further to smaller parts plunging into the ocean," she said.

A few moments later it dawned on them that it could be a falling meteor.

"Then it hit us—those were not fireworks but meteor entering the earth's atmosphere! While celebrating what we witnessed, we heard a series of explosions 2 minutes after we saw the meteor explode that were similar to thunder. We stayed for another 30 minutes in the patio, expecting to see possible brother meteors that will follow. Nothing happened anymore and the night sky resumed with its abundance of stars and visible satellites crossing the Marianas. It was so unreal and we will probably not see anything like that in our lifetime again!"

PROPST

From Page 1

portion of the CCC's board meeting at the Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai.

Propst also expects IPI to be given another extension to complete its casino/resort project in Garapan.

He also questioned why IPI has not been required to pay a developer's infrastructure tax, considering that one of his colleagues in the Legislature has introduced a bill to fund basic infrastructure like lighting on the streets in villages. Propst questioned the need for such funding when there is an \$18 million or more that the government should be collecting from IPI in developer's infrastructure tax.

Developer's tax is 2% of a project's cost.

Propst said it is within the CCC commissioners' power and purview to ensure that this developer's infra-

structure tax is paid so that the Department of Public Works can have the necessary funding.

"I don't want to be here to be the bad guy, or blast IPI. I'm not here for that. I'm here because I care," said Propst, adding that he is a member of the House's Gaming Committee chaired by Rep. Ralph Yumul (R-Saipan).

Propst said one of the most frustrating things is that Yumul sent a letter to CCC a couple of months ago, requesting for information on the community benefit fund, but that the response was that it's still under investigation.

"We have an obligation to find this out. And if you need to, move for executive committee to discuss this and we're okay with that. But we are in this position for a reason," he said, adding that the House does not want to be forced to use its subpoena powers just to get the information.

Propst said IPI is contractually obligated to pay the community benefit fund, yet \$37 million of that is unaccounted for.

He said it is frustrating as some people are still living in tents.

"Here, we have the IPI having numerous consultants who, as far as we know, don't have any deliverables. I'd like to see the deliverables," Propst said, pointing out that these consultants have been paid regularly, but not the contractors.

He said if not paid, these vendors suffer and will have to lay off their employees. "It's only fair that they get paid," Propst said.

At the same Thursday's meeting, representatives of many vendors and former IPI contractors accused IPI of engaging in a pattern of practice of breaching contracts and dishonoring obligations. IPI allegedly owes them a total of \$35 million. Many of the cases are undergoing court litigations.

Although the funding is expected early next year, McPhetres said it could still take another two years before the construction of the facility is completed.

"It's still going to take time be-

cause we have to send out a bid and then we have to look at the bid and start the groundbreaking, so it might take two years. Maybe by the third year we will be able to fully implement it," she said.

CCC

From Page 1

to executive director Edward DeLeon Guerrero, urging the commission to act on reported claims of breaches of contracts to licensed professionals in the Commonwealth.

"This matter is taken seriously and the commission is launching its own investigations to ensure that IPI complies with its contractual, regulatory, and legal agreements," the statement said.

"The commission notes that there are defenses to these allegations and not every nonpayment or late payment automatically constitutes a breach. Issues such as nonpayment, nonperformance, and substantial performance are often questions of fact which require investigation and determinations by a neutral finder of fact. It is further noted that every vendor is unique and each contract is different," the statement added.

The commission statement said it is grateful to these vendors for bringing the matter to the commission's attention. "The commission will reach out

to the vendors for additional documentation and information, when necessary. The vendors can rest assured that the results of the investigations will bring forth appropriate actions."

In a separate statement, IPI said it has been working with a number of vendors to verify products and services provided, and develop mutually agreeable settlements of claimed obligations.

IPI said the main disputed area is construction contracts, especially the ones with Pacific Rim and USA Fanter.

"We are conducting an audit on their work and their full cooperation is required. We strongly urge both companies collaborate with IPI on the audit," the statement said. "We expect to complete the verification within a month and will take legal action if fraud is found."

"We respect the authority of the Commonwealth Casino Commission and will fully cooperate with its inquiries."

"We will continue to do our best to complete the casino project and contribute to CNMI economic growth. **(Saipan Tribune)**

SMOKING

From Page 1

So far, while there's been no major public reaction to the change, Maratita said there have been inquiries from the business community with regards to the local tobacco law and whether it will take effect after President Donald J. Trump signs the bill into law.

He, however, said while enforcing the new law is a federal mandate, many in the local and stateside levels are already following suit in changing their legal age requirement from 18 to 21 years old in the sale, purchase, and consumption of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping products.

"With regards as to when the change will take effect? It will depend on how soon the Legislature implements the amendment," he added.

Once the Legislature amends the CNMI Tobacco Control Act, Maratita assured that his department will enforce the law. "The CNMI Department of Commerce, ABTC Division stands ready to promulgate the new tobacco control regulations to be consistent with the anticipated amendment of the local CNMI tobacco control laws, in accordance with the new federal mandate."

Press secretary Kevin Bautista said the Office of the Governor is aware of the new federal law and will review it and see how it will be applied to the Commonwealth.

"The administration will be ready to review federal regulations and determine a proper course of enforcement through our Department of Commerce's Division of Alcohol, Beverage, and Tobacco Control," he said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Bautista said the new federal will go a long way in curbing teenage smoking not only in the U.S. but also in its territories like the CNMI.

"We all know of tobacco's negative effects on one's health, and this policy can assist in curbing tobacco usage at a younger age. The World Health Organization recently found that tobacco usage has declined globally due in large part to government-led control efforts to save lives and protect communities from tobacco. This administration will continue its work of tobacco enforcement and advocating for healthier organic alternatives, while also working with [the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.] on promoting healthier lifestyles and preventing our youth from negative usage," he said.

For VapSpot owner Louis Rodgers, the new federal law didn't come as a surprise.

"Back in November the White House had a meeting and the outcome was the introduction of Tobacco 21," he said.

Funded by the Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation, Tobacco 21 is a national campaign aimed at raising the minimum legal age for tobacco and nicotine sales in the U.S. to 21.

Rodgers said this will surely affect his business. "Based on survey responses, 18-21-year-olds account for 20% of my business. So, I'll definitely take a hit."

But even before the new federal law came into effect, Rodgers said he had been restricting the sale of certain products for 18-20-year-olds.

The New York Daily News said the age hike for tobacco purchase was included in a spending package Trump signed last Dec. 20, though it wasn't immediately clear how long it would take for the law to take effect.

Public warned of dangerous rip currents until Thursday

The public is being warned of a high risk of rip currents through Thursday afternoon.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, there will also be a high risk of dangerous rip currents along east facing reefs through Thursday morning. The high risk of rip currents could extend to north facing reefs early next week.

Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. Stay out of the water. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Do not swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

The public is being advised to avoid venturing out along east facing reefs and beaches. Strong rip currents will be life threatening.

A small craft advisory is in effect through Thursday afternoon. This means that wind speeds of 20 to 25 knots and combined seas of 9 to 12 feet are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft.

East to northeast winds of 15 to 25 knots are expected the next few days, with occasional gusts to 30 knots.

Combined seas of 8 to 10 feet will increase to between 10 and 12 feet by to-

day, Monday.

The public and inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid sailing in these conditions. *(Saipan Tribune)*

'We Are From the Temple' tonight

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In an event that's intended to showcase the varied talents on Saipan and become a performance space for the CNMI's many acts, the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe will be playing host today to an event called "We Are From the Temple," starting at 6pm.

Organized by Jerico Montenejo, 19, the show will feature many talented individuals such as Saipan Music and Dance Studio, 29:11, Kontagious Mindz, Profound Bandits, Neil Fama, Shane Sabino, Felix Rabauliman, and many more.

Montenejo hopes to make this the first of many events that he has lined up for his brand, called Temple: A Can-

vas to Wear.

With tonight's show, Montenejo hopes to create a place where everyone know that they are welcome and they shouldn't be afraid of how they want to express themselves. This is in line with his hope to create a dance studio—an environment for people to express themselves freely.

"This event coming up is a culmination of the entire decade's worth of work. It brings together people from different backgrounds, but we all come together to feel the need to express ourselves and any form of way. ...It is a place of freedom, a place of somewhere that's unapologetic, and it's understanding, kind, and loving," he said.

Montenejo currently works part-time at IT&E, balancing work and college.


VOX PUPOLI

What are your goals for 2020?

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Every year, millions of people make personal goals for the New Year's. Here's what some of the people in our community hope to achieve in the year 2020.

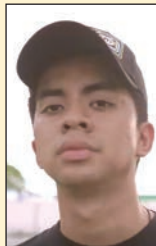
"I hope to find love in 2020 and meet more people."
—Penny Tang, 18



"I hope to be accepted into a nursing program. I also want to travel to Korea and lose weight."
—Sharmaine Aguilar, 21




"I want to...become a leader for myself and others [and] stand up for what's right and [convey] positivity much louder. I want to become the best version of myself for me and the people I surround myself with."
—Jerico Montenejo, 19



"I hope to travel the world and learn a different language. I also hope to find a career that most suits my interests."
—Mariano Aguon, 20



"I want to get married and start a family."
—Youme Sharry, 30



"I want to be more independent and hopefully move to the [mainland United] States."
—John Bernardio, 19





The Marianas
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Start & Finish : PDI Office at Grandvrio Resort Saipan
Distance : About 7.6 km

All participants will be meeting at PDI office located at Grandvrio Resort Saipan.



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Smiling Cove Marina

American Memorial Park

Hyatt Regency Saipan

Fiesta Resort & Spa

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Beach Rd

START/FINISH

1 Grandvrio Resort Saipan

2 American Memorial Park

3 Smiling Cove Marina

4 Smiling Cove Marina

5 Gov. Eloy S. Inos Peace Park

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Pacific Rim says IPI had committed to paying it in full

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_deltorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A contractor who is suing the Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC for alleged non-payment of \$5.65 million for services claimed that IPI had committed to paying the company in full once it receives a second \$100 million from a new Japanese funding group.

In his declaration filed before the federal court last Tuesday, Keith J. Stewart, manager and owner of Pacific Rim Land Development LLC, said this second drawdown was thought to be received in June 2019, then July, then August.

"I was told by IPI many, many times that IPI did not have the funds to pay at that particular time, but would ultimately pay the full amount due," Stewart said.

His declaration was filed in support of Pacific Rim's reply to IPI's opposition to Pacific Rim's second amended application for a mechanic's lien. He did not name the Japanese funding group in his declaration Tuesday.

In May 2019, *Saipan Tribune* ran a story about investment firm GCM Ltd. of Japan that was reportedly set to infuse fresh capital to the IPI project. GCM was reportedly investing \$500 million. GMC

had reportedly deposited \$100 million with IPI in May 2019.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona heard Pacific Rim's second amended application for mechanic's lien Thursday last week. The hearing will be continued on Feb. 11, 2020, at 9am.

Colin M. Thompson is counsel for Pacific Rim. Stewart was with Thompson in the courtroom. David G. Banes and Cong Nie argued as IPI counsels.

Pacific Rim is suing IPI for breach of contract for allegedly refusing to pay for services in the amount of \$5.65 million. Pacific Rim claimed to have substantially completed or completed the agreed-upon construction work for IPI's casino-resort project on Sept. 30, 2018.

Pacific Rim also filed an application for a mechanic's lien on IPI's hotel-casino project and on the land that it sits on. A mechanic's lien refers to a security interest in the title to property for the benefit of those who have supplied labor or materials that improve the property.

The court then consolidated Pacific Rim's lawsuit and the application for a mechanic's lien.

In IPI's opposition to Pacific Rim's second amended application for mechanic's lien,

Banes said the application should be dismissed.

In his declaration last Tuesday, Stewart said IPI just asked for them to be patient and work with them, which they did until they became exhausted from the broken promises to pay and filed suit.

Stewart said that he met with IPI again last Oct. 25 to resolve their dispute after IPI stopped making payments on the promissory note. Since then, Stewart said that IPI has not offered any payment to resolve the dispute.

Citing Thompson's communication to then-IPI general counsel Phillip J. Tydingco, Stewart said they tried to mediate the dispute and set up mediation. "IPI has never proposed a date for the mediation," Stewart said.

Pacific Rim and IPI entered into a construction contract in February 2018. Stewart said Pacific Rim submitted monthly invoices to IPI for the labor and materials provided to the Imperial Pacific Resort. He said IPI hired a third-party auditor company, Bluestone Management, to review the invoices.

Stewart said IPI's owners representative, Zhou Jing, who was provided with full authority to bind IPI with respect to the work and the construc-

tion contract for the duration of their agreement, reviewed their invoices through August 2018. He said IPI paid the first few invoices but, as time went on, they slowed payments and then stopped altogether.

Stewart said that on Sept. 21, 2018, IPI and Pacific Rim finalized negotiations about the amounts due under the construction contract and signed the promissory note.

He said that in November 2018, when IPI failed to make full payment on the note, IPI told him that the payment would simply be a little late. Stewart said that from November 2018 through the time the lawsuit was filed, Pacific Rim did everything it could to work with IPI. He said IPI repeatedly indicated payments would be made, but only a few partial payments were processed.

"IPI proposed revised pay-

ment plans and committed to making payments, but never met their obligations," Stewart said.

In IPI's opposition to the Pacific Rim's second application for mechanic's lien, Banes said Pacific Rim intentionally overstated the costs it incurred in the construction of IPI's hotel/casino project in Gapan. Banes said Pacific Rim fraudulently obtained from IPI a promissory note, which is therefore unenforceable.

Babauta: Panel to probe Torres a 'wonderful holiday gift' to CNMI



Rep. Sheila Babauta (Ind-Saipan) talks about her experience at the 2019 Obama Foundation Leaders: Asia Pacific Program, and relating it to the issues the CNMI is facing, at a House session on Capital Hill.

IVA MAURIN

By **IVA MAURIN**
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Fresh from the 2019 Obama Foundation leadership program in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Rep. Sheila Babauta (Ind-Saipan) appealed at the House of Representatives session last Dec. 20 to give the CNMI a gift this holiday season with the appointment of a special committee that would look into allegations of corruption by Gov. Ralph

DLG Torres.

"The formation of a special committee would be a wonderful gift to the CNMI this holiday season, and the report and recommendations on how we can really get to the center of our issues and just really do our part to contribute is what I'd like for all of us to support," Babauta said.

"I'm a proud daughter of the Marianas," Babauta added, addressing her fellow representatives. "I want what's

best, as I know we all do, for the CNMI. We want to leave this place better than we found it and it's doable. We can really do it."

The House minority bloc, of which Babauta is a member, asked House Speaker Blas Jonathan Attao (R-Saipan) in early December to appoint a special committee to investigate allegations of public corruption, fraud, waste, and abuse of public funds by the governor.

At the Obama Foundation leaders program, Babauta met with leaders from countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, and Myanmar, where the populations are in the 50-plus millions, and are experiencing turmoil, government conflicts, and military interference that are more troubling.

"When I say I come from the CNMI, where it's 55,000 people, it seems very doable. It seems hopeful that we can overcome a lot of the challenges that we face if we just really come together," Babauta said.

She added that it was very troubling to speak to other leaders in the Asia Pacific about what is happening in the CNMI "...we hear words [in the newspapers and social media] like disrespect and corruption and abuse of powers and misuse of public funds..."

Babauta, along with Samantha Birmingham-Babauta, represented the CNMI at the Obama Foundation Leaders program where they got to talk to former U.S. president Barack Obama.

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST DENGUE

Dengue fever is caused by the dengue virus, and is passed from person to person by mosquitoes. You cannot get dengue from touching or being coughed on.

It is usually a mild illness but can become serious, especially if the sick person has other medical conditions such as diabetes.

Symptoms of Dengue Fever

- ✓ Sudden, high fever
- ✓ Severe headaches and pain behind the eyes
- ✓ Severe joint and muscle pain
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Nausea and vomiting
- ✓ Skin rash that appears 2-5 days after the start of the fever

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, especially if you have just returned from a trip off-island, see your doctor right away.

Protect Against Mosquitoes = Protect Against Dengue

Mosquitoes breed in still water. Get rid of mosquito populations around your home by dumping out buckets, tires, toys, and anything that holds water.

Use Insect repellent

Cover up! Wear long sleeves when outside and cover strollers and cribs with mosquito netting.

Close doors and windows during sunrise and sunset, when mosquitoes are most active.

Put screens on doors and windows and make sure they do not have holes.

For more information on dengue, contact the CHCC Preparedness Program at 234-8950.

For more information on how to control mosquitoes, contact the Bureau of Environmental Health at 664-4780.



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Saipan boat owners form new association

After months of discussion among boaters on Saipan, a new association has been formed to promote both recreational and commercial boating in all its forms. The Saipan Boaters Association will soon be chartered as a non-profit corporation.

The purpose of the Saipan Boaters Association is:

1. To maintain communication with members concerning

any safety and security issues;

2. To work with local and federal authorities and legislative bodies to foster and promote boating activities and the improvement/establishment of marine facilities; and

3. To promote safe boating/sailing through marine safety classes and sailing instruction, among other goals.

Over 30 boat owners and oth-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The newly elected officers and directors of the Saipan Boaters Association. From left, Diego Benavente, Don Smith, Ron Smith, Ray Yumul, Mark Hanson, Joe Deleon Guerrero, and Robert Bracken.

NMI Supreme Court denies reconsideration

On Dec. 18, 2019, the NMI Supreme Court issued its opinion in *In re Estate of Pangelinan*, denying reconsideration of the order granting late filing and the order to register.

Claimant John S. Pangelinan appealed a number of orders in the probate case. During the course of the appeal, the Supreme Court granted the estate of Norberto Eduardo Pangelinan's motion to late file the response brief in its order granting late filing. After a series of motions and oppositions, the Supreme Court ordered Pangelinan to register as an electronic filing and service provider user in its order to register. Pangelinan sought reconsideration of the order granting late filing and the order to register.

The Supreme Court found

the estate's motion to late file the response brief was properly granted under the NMI Supreme Court Rules, but in the future, automatic extensions will be subject to the same "highly disfavored" standard as discretionary extensions when considering motions to late file briefs.

It also mandated electronic filing, service, and registration in appeals to the Supreme Court.

Therefore, the court denied reconsideration because Pangelinan failed to present an intervening change of controlling law, the availability of new evidence, or the need to correct a clear error or prevent manifest injustice.

The high court's full order is available at <http://cnmi-law.org/pdf/supreme/2019-MP-12.pdf>. (PR)

er interested individuals recently elected a board of directors who are tasked to conduct and manage the Saipan Boaters Association. Directors will make policies and procedures consistent with law and the bylaws of the SBA, and appoint committees to report and make recommendations to the board.

The SBA officers elected at the meeting are Diego Benavente as president; Ray Yumul as vice president; Robert Bracken as treasurer; and Ron Smith as secretary.

In addition to the officers,

the five other board of directors are Scott Shular, Don Smith, Joji Taguchi, Joe P. Deleon Guerrero, and Mark Hanson.

Benavente said, "This is exciting because I believe that we can do so much as an association to benefit the boaters in the CNMI."

Smith said, "The establishment of this organization provides boaters with a unified voice in the Commonwealth."

Yumul said, "Throughout the

mainland U.S., most marinas have yacht clubs, boating clubs and other recreational clubs, which stimulates interests in boating for the community to take part in, and this association will accomplish just that."

The SBA assigned Shular to chair the Fuel Facility Committee. "One concern we have is the lack of a fuel facility which is one of the priorities of the SBA, because the current practice of refueling at the

[Smiling Cove] Marina is not only inconvenient, it is also unsafe," Shular said.

Any individual who is interested in joining the SBA as a charter member may contact any of the officers before the Jan. 1, 2020 deadline. Regular membership enrollment will begin Jan. 2, 2020. For more information, email board@saipanboaters.org or call Smith at 287-5518 or Benavente at 285-5848. (PR)



NAOMI TUDELA

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Espeleta wins Skymark plane contest

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Using mainly recycled materials like water bottles and caps, Mario K. Espeleta was able to create a replica of a Skymark airplane that won him first place in the Skymark's Night plane contest as part of the Christmas in the Marianas celebration last Dec. 21 at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan.

Espeleta, who is with Duty Free Shopping, said his daughter, grandson, and wife inspired him to join the contest. At first, he was hesitant to join as he had no

The entries of a model plane contest are shown during Skymark Night at Christmas in the Marianas on Dec. 21, 2019, at Paseo de Marianas. MVA

time. However, at the prodding of his wife, grandson, and daughter, he managed to squeeze in the project in between 8pm and 2am, after he got off from work. Espeleta would take advantage of any free time he had, whether it was on his lunch break or off days. In all, he had only one week to come up with his winning creation.



Children and staff of Skymark Airlines prepare to cut the cake during Skymark Night at Christmas in the Marianas on Dec. 21, 2019, at Paseo de Marianas. Skymark Night was celebrated to mark the recent start of direct, daily flights between Saipan and Japan. MVA



A lucky raffle drawing winner receives a roundtrip ticket for two from Saipan to Japan during Skymark Night at Christmas in the Marianas on Dec. 21, 2019, at Paseo de Marianas. Skymark Night was celebrated to mark the recent start of direct, daily flights between Saipan and Japan. MVA

Espeleta used recyclable items such as a Fanta bottle, Evian water bottle, and caps for infant food as wheels. The main highlight of his plane is a window that you could open. Inside the cabin, at one end, are about four or five flight at-

tendants and two children that are seated; on the other end are three more flight attendants. There's also a button you can press that will light up the inside. Another highlight was a light in the plane's engines. "I really didn't know I won."

I went back to work and I got a call from my friend saying that I won," says Espeleta "I am so happy [because] it's a dream come true for my grandson."

Espeleta took home \$500 for placing first. Vladimir S. Palma came second and took home \$300. In third place was Kenjirho Matias, who pocketed \$200.

Besides Espeleta, Palma, and Matias, over 19 other contestants participated in Skymark's Night Plane contest. Yujeong Son came in fourth place, Jack Villagomez came in fifth place, Prashib Pandey placed sixth, Mercedes Cabrera placed seventh, Jeewoo Son placed eighth, Evan Cabrera placed ninth, Lars Wolf placed 10th, Conall Hartig placed 11th, the group of Dionne Torres, Aaron Diaz, Jeremiah Cruz, and Nathan Villagomez placed 12th, Alana Lei Macaranas placed 13th, Mark Abugan placed 14th, Taiga Scoggins placed 15th, Kate Garcia placed 16th, and the group of Justin Celis, Dillian Cruz, and Toryanna Quintano placed 17th.

All participants who placed fourth to 17th took home an MVA gift bag.

The winners were announced last Dec. 21, 2019. The information on the prizes they won were released on Dec. 26, 2019.



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ADDENDUM NO. 1 12/19/19 ITB20-GOV-015

This is to notify all potential Bidders that the items contained in this addendum are added to and/or deleted and become part of the specifications and bid documents for the above referenced bid.

- The bid submission has been extended from December 30, 2019 to **January 30, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**
 - Sealed bids must be marked ITB20-GOV-015 Supply, Construction and Implementation of the CUC Water System Mitigation Project. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascension Drive, Capitol Hill on Saipan no later than 10:00 a.m. ChST January 30, 2020. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. ChST January 30, 2020 and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to a.magofna@dof.gov.mp. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 30, 2020 and the bid documents must be received no later than February 10, 2020. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be the cause for rejection of a bid. Bids will be publicly open and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascension Drive, Capitol Hill on Saipan at 10:30 a.m. ChST February 11, 2020. However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be open at 10:30 a.m. ChST January 30, 2020.
- Revised Scope of Work – Bidders may pick up the revised Scope of Work at the Hazard Mitigation Office, Office of the Governor in Capitol Hill.
- Specification for the Generators – Bidders may pick up the generator specifications at the Hazard Mitigation Office, Office of the Governor in Capitol Hill.
- Revised Bid Schedule – Bidders may pick up the revised Bid Schedule at the Hazard Mitigation, Office, Office of the Governor in Capitol Hill.
- Request for Information – Bidders may pick up the Request for Information at the Hazard Mitigation Office, Office of the Governor in Capitol Hill.
- Notes for revisions in Specifications – Bidders may pick up the notes for revisions in Specifications at the Hazard Mitigation Office, Office of the Governor in Capitol Hill.

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. Acknowledge receipt of this addendum on the Bid Form. Questions concerning this project addendum shall be directed to Leona Deleon Guerrero in writing by e-mail to ldguerrero@omb.gov.mp or fax to (670) 664-2408.

Virginia C. Villagomez
Governor's Authorized Representative

Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement and Supply

END OF ADDENDUM NO. 1
Addendum No. 1 for ITB20-GOV-015



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Proposal package will be available on November 13, 2019, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays or you may obtain the proposal package online at www.nmhc.gov.net "Public Notice/Announcements" subtitle "Request for Proposal".

The provisions of the CNMI Procurement regulations, NMIAC 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference will be held at 10:00 a.m. on ~~December 4, 2019~~ December 19, 2019, at the NMHC Central Office Conference Room in Garapan. Failure to attend the Mandatory pre-proposal conference will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/7689; (670)483-9447; or email at office-manager@nmhc.gov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Kimo M. Rosario
Acting Chairman of the Board

/s/ Francisco C. Aguon
Acting Director
Division of Procurement & Supply

JOETEN

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Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

The 2010s are nearly over. What will the decade stand for?

Every decade eventually succumbs to a tidy political and cultural shorthand. Quick, picture the 1960s, '70s or '80s. The societal struggles of the time spring to mind, straightforward and clear. Like it or not, so do the fashions and hairstyles.

In the waning days of 2019, amid abundant reflections on the decade in news, arts and sports, the 2010s still look fuzzy. We remember too much that competes for attention. Forgetting hasn't yet sharpened our view. It's not yet time to consign Donald Trump, climate change, immigration or gun violence to the '10s—they might yet crest in the '20s.

While the dividing lines of a decade blur during the living of it, change over a mere 10 years can be profound. In 2009, the smartphone had not yet changed everything. Barack Obama was president, Oprah Winfrey hosted a talk show in Chicago and the Cubs were a century into a World Series drought with no end in sight. Richard M. Daley was mayor of Chicago, and Rod Blagojevich was a free man. People hailed cabs on the street. Next-day delivery was for urgent business.

The decade to come will likely complete its own cycle of dramatic change in the ways we work, shop and drive. For openers, the year ahead will bring a presidential election, a U.S. census, a Summer Olympics.

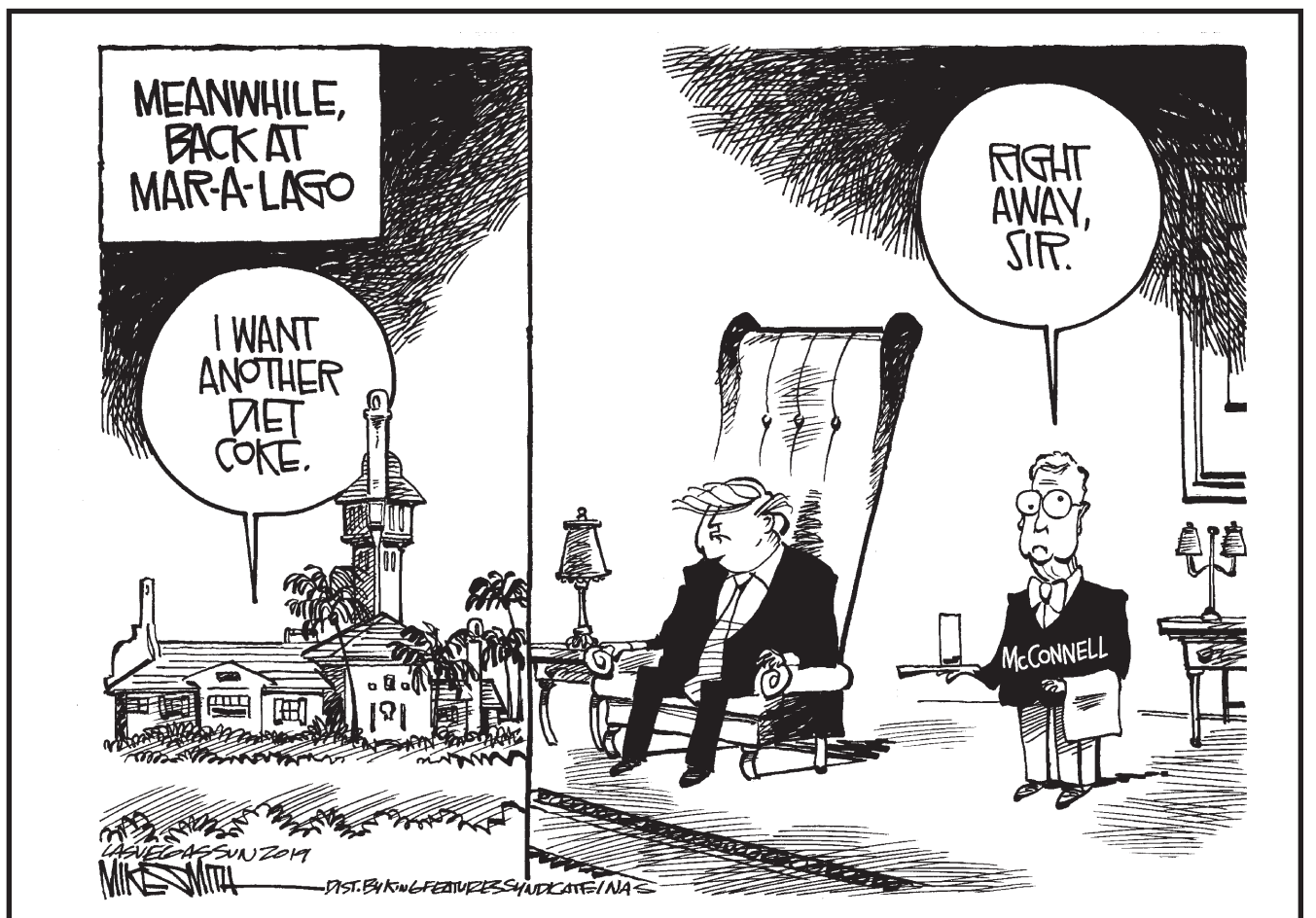
Completing a year ending in 9, people are poised for the reset of a stopwatch back at zero, undeterred by the hands raised in the back of the room by the U.S. Naval Observatory and other calendar sticklers. Because there is no year zero between 1 B.C. and 1 A.D., they inconveniently point out, the first year of a new decade ends in 1. Thus 2021 will begin the new decade, just as 2001 began the new millennium.

Whichever side you take on that—we plan to start counting the '20s on Jan. 1, 2020—it's events, not math, that define decades. The aughts feel like they began on 9/11. Many issues the nation confronted in the '10s grew from the financial crisis of 2008.

Taking these moments to reflect on blockbuster headlines or hipster beards or skinny jeans not only imprints what was important, but also the opposite: It reminds us that not everything that shouts loudly for a moment holds lasting sway. Society reviews, incorporates, learns and leaves behind even events that seem shattering at the time, to make room for the new. Later, sometimes much later, it looks back and wrestles again with what it all signified.

If news is the first draft of history, the turning of a decade is something in between. What this decade wrought will be most clear when it's time for "The 2010s are back!" retro nights, complete with blocky rectangular eyeglasses, perfect for the necessary hindsight.

(c)2019 Chicago Tribune



From Instagram to Baby Yoda, the 2010s entertained people. But are they using the Force wisely?

As the 2010s come to a close, so does the moment I dread, trying to make sense of the past decade.

It's not easy to tell what distinguishes this decade from those that came before it.

This isn't the Roaring '20s with their jazz clubs and flappers. It's not the 1930s with that Depression. It's certainly not the 1960s, OK, boomer?

I expect the 2010s to be remembered as a political decade that spanned the gulf between President Barack "No Drama" Obama and President Donald "Mo' Drama" Trump.

It was a media decade that began with the birth of Instagram and ended with me still trying to figure out what Instagram is good for. ("Twitter for illiterates" sounds about right to me, although it does do a good job of distributing your neighbors' vacation photos in a format you can conveniently ignore.)

Its defining moment may well have come in November when Baby Yoda, the little green scene-stealing puppet in the Disney+ "Star Wars" series "The Mandalorian," made news about itself. He—or she, we're never really told—drove almost twice as many average social media interactions, according to NewsWhip and Axios, as any of the 2020 Democratic presidential candidates.

W.C. Fields famously advised that actors refuse to work with children or animal acts. Baby Yoda seems to offer a bit of both. May the Force be with him. Or her.

I'll remember the 2010s as a media decade, a time when more people than ever before used the internet to do what former Federal Communications Commissioner Nicholas Johnson advised in the title of his 1970 book, "How to Talk Back to Your Television Set."

Today we grapple with the new challenges of separating real news from fake news on the internet, where political propaganda has been empowered by targeted marketing aimed at steering around the least persuadable to reach the most gullible audiences.

It is entirely appropriate that President Trump, a real-estate developer and reality-TV host, came to power in this new media age. He long ago perfected the art of relentless self-promotion across multiple media platforms—as varied as tabloid gossip pages and get-rich-now advice books.

That probably explains why he waited until 2016 to run for president, when the Democratic field would be cleared of the charismatic Obama. After rolling through his Republican competitors, who failed to take him seriously enough until it was too late, he beat Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, who received more total votes but not in the right states to win the Electoral College.

Now a new crop of Democratic candidates is being judged,

By CLARENCE PAGE

Chicago Tribune

Clarence Page is a member of the Chicago Tribune Editorial Board. Readers may send him email at cpage@chicagotribune.com.



not the least on how well they come across on television. Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg is going full media blitz. Instead of going on the road to run in the early primaries, he's using his fortune to buy millions of dollars in TV ads nationwide.

By Christmas, he reached 5% approval in the polls, which put him in fifth place, behind South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg (9%), Sen. Elizabeth Warren (15%), Sen. Bernie Sanders (17%) and former Vice President Joe Biden (29%). He led Trump by six points in a head-to-head matchup in a Quinnipiac University poll, 48% to 42%.

It's too early to make too much of that, but if the charisma-challenged founder of Bloomberg News performs well enough when actual votes are cast, he could achieve yet another marriage of media and politics.

I wish I could feel happier about that. Unfortunately, the slow but steady takeover of politics and government by media and the big money it takes to purchase big advertising remind me of another media studies book from a past era: the late Neil Postman's "Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business."

In that 1985 book about how media are reshaping our culture, he feared that we were wrong to congratulate ourselves for avoiding the authoritarian "Big Brother" horrors of George Orwell's "1984."

We should also remember, he reminded us, of Aldous Huxley's equally chilling "Brave New World."

Whereas Orwell feared those who would ban books, Postman wrote, Huxley feared "that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one."

His concern, like mine, is to have the sort of well-informed electorate on which democracy depends. Unfortunately, there also is the reality that the late Fox News chief Roger Ailes says in the Showtime miniseries based on Gabriel Sherman's bestseller "The Loudest Voice in the Room."

"People don't want to be informed," he says, "they want to feel informed."

Maybe so. But sometimes our feelings can fool us.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Lisa Murkowski breaks from the GOP pack

Breaking with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska told a TV interviewer in her home state this week that the Senate shouldn't work "hand-in-glove with the defense" on President Trump's impeachment trial.

Congress as a co-equal branch of government—what a concept. But Murkowski was only half right in her critique.

McConnell's obeisance to the White House deserves every bit of scorn that it gets, and infinitely more from his fellow Senate Republicans than it appears to be receiving (at least in public). The Senate may be under Republican control, but it should never be under White House control, no matter who occupies the Oval Office.

I know, the party of Trump argues that the House didn't take impeachment seriously, so the Senate shouldn't either. Instead, the GOP argues that this impeachment was merely an act of bitter partisanship, and with no House Republican voting for either article of impeachment, it's easy to sell that idea. But the politics that infuse the process shouldn't obscure the more important institutional struggle at play.

Presidents have long tussled with Congress over how much their administrations must reveal about internal deliberations. But Trump pushed defiance to a new extreme. Even before the impeachment inquiry began, his administration stonewalled House oversight efforts—most notably, lawmakers' attempt to get to the bottom of how the Commerce Department decided to add a question about citizenship to the 2020 census. Then, after special counsel Robert S. Mueller III teed up the question of whether Trump sought to obstruct the Russia collusion probe, the administration blocked lawmakers' attempts to answer it.

So by the time the White House counsel declared that the administration would not cooperate in any way, shape or form with the House impeachment inquiry because the House wasn't playing by the rules Trump wanted, a pattern had already been well-established. This wasn't the ordinary give-and-take between branches. Besides, even the White House acknowledged that it would not commit to cooperating with the impeachment inquiry no matter what concessions House Democrats made.

Murkowski elided all that in her interview with KTUU of Anchorage, instead criticizing House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) for rushing the articles through. If House Democrats believed White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney (who carried out Trump's order to freeze security aid to Ukraine) and former national security adviser John Bolton (who reportedly characterized the efforts to get Ukraine to launch the two politically oriented investigations as a "drug deal") had crucial information that was being withheld, Murkowski said, they should have gone to court to enforce the subpoenas for the two men's testimony.

It's true that, having gone to court to enforce subpoenas in at least three other investigations (the census, obstruction in the Mueller probe and Trump's tax returns), House Democrats did not do so with witnesses related to Trump's Ukraine dealings. But that's because they built a damning case without Mulvaney or Bolton's testimony. Waiting for the courts to rule on whether those two could be compelled to testify risked pushing votes in the House and Senate deep into the 2020 campaign, only exacerbating the already superheated partisanship.

Besides, the House had a bigger institutional concern. The Constitution gives that chamber the sole power to determine how to conduct an impeachment. Trump was withholding documents and testimony in a transparent effort to dictate how the House carried out its business. The president is free to complain all he wants about unfair treatment and a rush to judgment. But the Constitution couldn't be more clear about who gets to set the rules, and it's not Trump.

I get the political constraints involved, but it's a little weird to see senators embrace the idea that a president can defy the legislative branch in the extreme and absolutist way that Trump has because the courts will somehow sort out the mess. Trump's strategy has always been to "deny, deny, deny," wearing down his critics as he runs out the clock. This time, House Democrats decided not to play along.

The Senate's top Democrat, Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer of New York, has called on the Senate to summon the administration witnesses and documents that were withheld



In this Dec. 19, 2019 file photo, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, speaks during a hearing on the impact of wildfires on electric grid reliability on Capitol Hill in Washington. **AP**

from the House. Meanwhile, Pelosi has held off sending over the articles of impeachment until the Senate sets its rules for the trial.

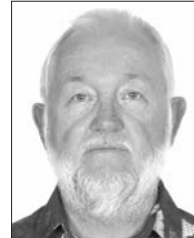
LITERARY NOOK

T.O.A.S.T.: Telling Old Age Secret Tales

By JOEY CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



Island Where My Reasons End

"...beneath the plane; that coastline of dim beaches deep in sand stretching indistinguishably all the way to where my reasons end."

—Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979)

Long distance telephone information is now in cyber space from the Mariana Islands sandy and rocky beaches to Beijing email and cell phone messages with electronic bells rapidly race

so everywhere night and day you can hear cellphones ring.
"Who know where the time goes" sings Joni Mitchell
the coconut telegraph rings all around the island
our arguments shared with so many its hard to tell
why my primos and compadres are all laughing and smiling?
Off island for months when delayed by two typhoons
whats the real reason you have gone away
where have you been the past two full moons
will you be back for the fiesta by next Sunday.
As I fly off island I think I see you on a beach below
Is it for real how I feel? I miss you. Do you know?

New Year's New Fears New Tears

"...Tears of rage, tears of grief, why must I always be the thief, come to me now, you know we're so alone and life is brief."

—chorus for song *Tears of Rage* by The Band.

Tears of joy for many a young girl and boy
tears of pain for many with problems from aging
young adults enthralled with their latest cyber toy
elders depressed as limited mobility keeps raging.
New fears for our parents and many friends with cancer
diabetes and dialysis concerns and care increase
new fears of political leaders who have no answer
as international relations head away from peace.

By JON HEALEY

Los Angeles Times

Jon Healey is the Los Angeles Times' deputy editorial page editor.



Republicans have pointed to these moves as evidence that Democrats are trying to fill the holes in the House's investigation.

That may well be true, if you believe that truthful testimony from Bolton and Mulvaney would only make Trump look worse. Yet what we've already heard from other witnesses makes Trump look bad enough. Whether that behavior is sufficient to warrant removing him from office is something reasonable people can disagree on.

The House has made its case against Trump. If that isn't persuasive to senators, they're not compelled to try to make it more so. But if they think the House has raised questions that demand answers about Trump's behavior, they should try to answer them, regardless of what the White House wants.

This new year is really not much different from the old and Asian new year or Spring Festival is yet to come there are many new fears and failures soon to be told be like Little Jack Horner get into it and pull out a plum. There's a tear in my beer and I'm missing you my dear With more reasons for tears under a sky blue and clear.

The Greatest Christmas Gift

By ROSEMARIE D. EMBILE

SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Are you spending time thinking of a Christmas present for me? No need to, because for me, YOU are the greatest gift!

You are a gift

You are a gift when you smile.

You are a gift when you pray for others.

You are a gift when you encourage others.

You are a gift when you are kind to others.

You are a gift when you are respectful of everyone.

You are a gift when you simply listen to other people.

You are a gift when you forgive those who offend you.

You are a gift when you do things with good intentions.

You are a gift when you give time to family and friends.

You are a gift when you appreciate others with sincerity.

You are a gift when you serve as a good example to others.

You are a gift when you are grateful for everything you have.

You are a gift when you reach out to others who are in need.

You are a gift when you find happiness in the simple things.

You are a gift when you laugh out loud with family and friends.

Indeed, YOU are the greatest gift when you do things out of LOVE.

Yes

For me and the rest of the world

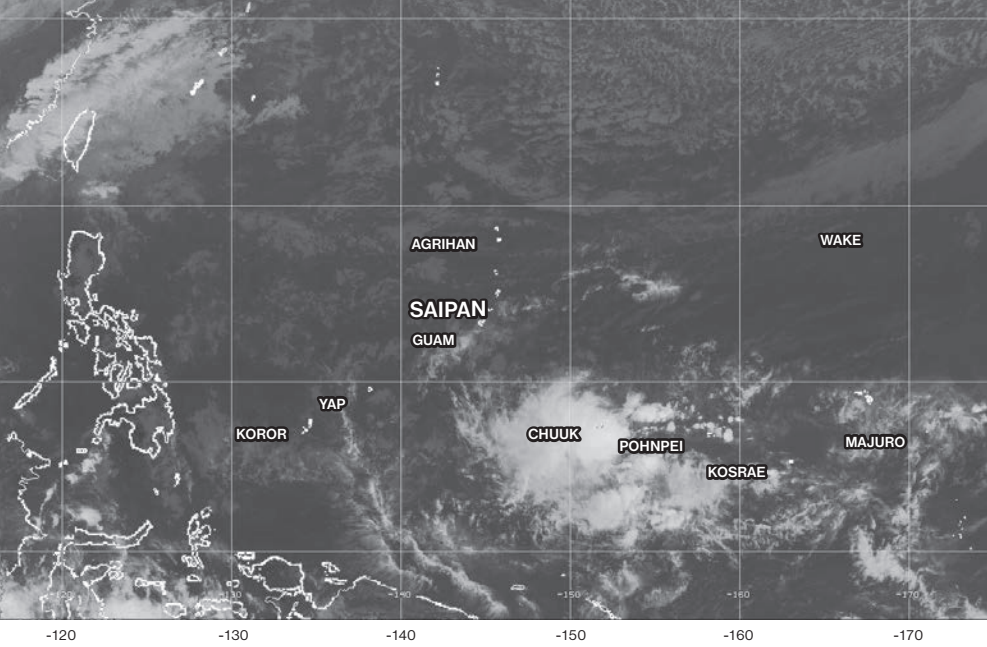
you are the greatest Christmas gift

by simply being WHO YOU ARE

Rosemarie D. Embile is an elementary teacher at Northern Marianas International School for four years. She is also a public secondary school teacher in the Philippines for more than a decade. Her teaching experiences inspired her to share some thoughts and ideas through writing blogs, Facebook pages, Google sites, etc.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Breezy. Partly sunny with isolated showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.		Breezy. Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
86°	76°	86°	76°	86°	76°	86°	76°	87°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:27 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

The dry-season weather pattern will persist through the coming week. The models indicate that the first shear line passage of the season will be Monday and Tuesday. They predict a band of clouds and showers moving down across the Marianas on Monday with lingering clouds persisting through Thursday. Despite the clouds, deep-layer moisture will be lacking and only isolated showers are expected. High pressure building across the Northwest Pacific will maintain breezy conditions of 20 to 30-mph winds across the Marianas through at least Tuesday.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Windy	84° / 77°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 77°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	73° / 61°	
Beijing	Sunny	27° / 10°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	70° / 63°	
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	83° / 72°	
London	Sunny	52° / 41°	
Los Angeles	Rain	62° / 50°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	70° / 55°	
Miami	Showers	78° / 70°	
New York	Rain	46° / 41°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	54° / 37°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	41° / 32°	
Busan	Sunny	36° / 25°	
Rome	Sunny	52° / 30°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	61° / 39°	
San Francisco	Sunny	55° / 45°	
Seoul	Sunny	28° / 16°	
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	61° / 36°	
Washington, DC	Showers	68° / 43°	

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:13 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.40	
11:28 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.62	
5:10 PM	LOW TIDE	1.01	
9:26 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.43	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Tuesday	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Wednesday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	9:46 AM	9:30 PM	-
Tuesday	10:28 AM	10:19 PM	-
Wednesday	11:06 AM	11:06 PM	-
Thursday	11:42 AM	11:53 PM	-
Friday	12:18 PM	-	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 2, 2019							
DEPARTURES			ARRIVALS				
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN				
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	6:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6	UA104	4:45pm	5:26pm	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)			NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN				
SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily	SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
				SKY816	5:05pm	8:00pm	6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)			BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN				
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:30am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:30am+1	3
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)			SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN				
TW308	2:05am	6:05am	Daily	OZ6233	8:00am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6
OZ626	2:10am	6:05am	1	OZ623	8:55am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7
OZ626	2:50am	6:25am	3, 7	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 4, 5, 6	TW309	11:10am	4:25pm	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:35am	Daily	OZ625	7:30pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ6243	3:20pm	7:10pm	2, 4, 6	TW307	7:45pm	1:05am+1	Daily
OZ624	3:50pm	7:40pm	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
TW310	5:25pm	10:15pm	Daily				
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)			SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN				
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	4, 7	3U8647	10:30pm	4:30am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)			HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN				
JD396	7:30am	12:05pm	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	8:50pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)			BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN				
MU764	1:30am	6:00am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:50pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN				
OZ626/701	2:10am	10:35am	1 via ICN	UA184/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:35am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA156/193	6:20pm	11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR	OZ704/6233	11:45pm	1:20pm+1	1, 3, 5 via ICN
				OZ704/623	11:45pm	2:30pm+1	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)			HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN				
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/6233	12:35am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ746/623	12:35am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:40am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ6243/9661	3:20pm	11:15pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ624/9661	3:50pm	11:15pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
				UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily

1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Mochi ceremony closes out Christmas in the Marianas



An American sign language interpreter interprets a performance on the stage of the Christmas in the Marianas at the Paseo de Marianas last Saturday.

PHOTOS BY JUSTINE NAUTA



Members of the Japanese community on Saipan join the traditional pounding of glutinous short-grain rice at the Mochitsuki Festival during the final night of the Christmas in the Marianas celebration at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan last Saturday, Dec. 28.

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As has become a tradition for many years now, the Mochitsuki Festival, which is a Japanese ceremony for making glutinous rice cakes, closed out the final night of the Christmas in the Marianas celebration at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan last Saturday, Dec. 28.

Hundreds of tourists and residents alike came together at the Paseo de Marianas for the traditional preparation of mochi rice cake, which is a traditional food prepared be-

fore the Japanese New Year.

The festival started at 6pm with the rice pounding and dance performances by the Saipan Awaodori Team greeting all visitors that joined the event.

Mochitsuki is a Japanese ceremony for making rice cakes made of mochigom—glutinous short-grain japonica rice. Participants pound the rice into a paste that will be molded into various shapes and are given away for free.

“The mochi is what I look forward to every year. My favorite is the sweetened mochi and the mochi wrapped in seaweed and soy sauce,” said one

member of the audience.

In a unique twist this year, one of the performances on the stage was accompanied by an American sign language interpreter, to enable those who are hard of hearing to participate. That feature was a welcome addition to the celebration. “I enjoyed the ASL performance the most. I got to learn a little bit of sign language so that was pretty cool,” said a member of the audience.

Other acts included the Holiday Rockin’ in American Sign Language, Hopwood Middle School Glee Club, Marianas High School

Rhythm N’ Harmony, more “mochi” pounding, Wolfgang Christian School, Pacific Flowers dance group, and the Refaluwasch Warriors dance group. The performances lasted until 10pm.

“The Christmas in the Marianas is one of my favorite events to attend especially since they have free mochi,” said one audience member.

Christmas in the Marianas was celebrated every Saturday in December and was organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority, PDM Promoters, Pacific Development Inc. and other travel partners.



Besides mochi, the Mochitsuki Festival also had traditional Japanese drinks.



Japanese Consul Kazuhiko Ono participate in the Mochitsuki Festival during the final night of the Christmas in the Marianas celebration at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan last Saturday, Dec. 28.



Participants get their pre-prepared mochi rice cakes at the Christmas in the Marianas festival at the Paseo de Marianas last Saturday.

Business

CHRISTMAS PARTY AND 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Kalayaan fetes employees in double celebration



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Kalayaan Inc. employees, led by president Doll Alinas, were dressed to the nine as they celebrated their 20th year anniversary and Christmas party last Dec. 21 at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

School food service company Kalayaan Inc. celebrated its 20th anniversary and Christmas party with much fanfare last Dec. 21 at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Employees, including president Doll Alinas, dressed to the nines in a grand celebration of the company's two decades of existence that saw them through the usual birth pains, a devastating fire, and Super Typhoon Yutu.

Alinas, in her speech, said Kalayaan, which means freedom in Filipino, had its origins when it initially prepared food for the Philippine Independence Day celebration on Saipan.

They planned to make it into a food truck business that offered rice bowl meals, but Kalayaan settled to packing meals out of an apartment in Chalan Laulau in June 1999.

From an original two-man operation, Kalayaan eventually outgrew its Chalan Laulau home and moved to a rented house in Koblerville. In 2007, its operations were transferred to a 2,000-square-foot facility in San Antonio.

By that time, the company was already deep into school food service, which has since become the backbone of Kalayaan's operations—a fact that is not lost on Alinas.

"To our business partners from financial institutions, suppliers, insurance providers, private, and governmental agencies alike: You are an integral part of why [Kalayaan] is able to deliver its outstanding service to our most precious clients—our students.



The company's Procurement and Administration Department won the Christmas video presentation competition and the \$2,500 cash prize that came with it.

You are fused with our team and we are proud to work with you," she said.

In hindsight, Alinas said she was probably destined to work side by side with the Public School System, having worked for PSS before.

"To our school administrators, teachers and staff: As far as difficulty is concerned, I think your work is definitely 'up' here, but having been a high school and middle school teacher myself at one point in my professional life, I know working with kids is definitely one of the most rewarding things anyone can do. The type of work we see that you do to make your students excel drives us to challenge ourselves even further so we can do better," she said.

Alinas also thanked Kalayaan employees for loyally serving the company the past 20 years and even helping it endure a fire that engulfed its San Antonio facility in 2012, leaving the company with nothing to salvage, plus Super Typhoon Yutu that battered its relocated headquarters in Agangan Lane six



King of the night Riel Paynor and queen of the night Corazon Domine.

years later in 2018.

"To be in business for 20 years means having incredible people in your company. ...I am very grateful for the opportunity to work with a group of talented, passionate, and caring people. Your willingness to give of yourselves and help each other is very special and is deeply admired. You are simply the best," she said.

Kalayaan's ability to rise from the ashes has been exemplified by being the back-to-back No. 1 company in the years PSS bidded out its food service contract in 2015 and 2018.

"To add icing and frosting to this glorious two-peat victory for our company, we were awarded the Rota and Tinian food services con-

tracts," added Alinas.

Service awards were also handed out at the occasion, to Corazon Domine, Jessica Dizon, and Raul Dolotina (5 years) and Simplicia S. Sunio (10 years), who was also given the employee of the year award.

In a night of glitz and glamour, none shone brighter than

Riel Paynor and Corazon Domine, who bagged the king and queen of the night plums, respectively.

Kalayaan's Procurement and Administration Department also beat all comers in the Christmas video presentation competition and went home with the winner-take-all \$2,500 cash prize.

Navy considers shipbuilding cuts for upcoming budget

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—

The Navy is proposing construction cutbacks and accelerated ship retirements that would delay, or sink, the Navy's goal of a larger fleet—and potentially hurt shipyards, according to an initial proposal.

The proposal would shrink the size of the fleet from today's level of 293 ships to 287 ships, a far cry from the official goal of 355 ships established in the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act.

According to a defense official familiar with the memo, budget negotiations are ongoing and no final decisions have been made. But the Navy is looking at a number of ways to cut costs to fund other priorities, the official said.

One of the proposed cuts would reduce the number of Arleigh Burke-class destroyers planned for construction from 12 to seven over the next five years, trimming \$9.4 billion, or about 8%, from the shipbuilding budget, the official said.

Another potential cut would decommission Ticonderoga-class cruisers more quickly over the next five years, leaving nine in the fleet, rather

than 13.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss preliminary budget planning discussions that have not been made public.

"Either option runs counter to the Navy's stated requirement for a 355-ship fleet, and would not be well received on Capitol Hill given there's still consensus that the military and strategic threat from Russia and China is only increasing," said naval analyst Jay Korman of Avastent Group.

Defense analyst Norman Friedman said the proposal would represent a major reduction in anti-aircraft capability that is provided by destroyers and cruisers at a time when the Navy is facing more sophisticated threats from aircraft and missiles.

"If you were serious about facing down the Chinese, you'd probably want more of that than less," said Friedman.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are produced at two shipyards, Maine's Bath Iron Works, a General Dynamics subsidiary, and Ingalls Shipbuilding in Mississippi. A Bath spokesman declined to comment.

Nation

5 stabbed at Hanukkah celebration north of NYC

MONSEY, N.Y. (AP)—A man attacked a Hanukkah celebration at a rabbi's home north of New York City late Saturday, stabbing and wounding five people before fleeing in a vehicle, police said.

The attack appeared to be the latest in a string targeting Jews in the region, including a massacre at a kosher grocery store in New Jersey earlier this month.

Police said the stabbings happened at around 10 p.m. in Monsey, one of several Hudson Valley towns that have seen an influx in large numbers of Hasidic Jews in recent years.

Ramapo Police Chief Brad Weidel said hours later that New York City police had located a vehicle and possible suspect being sought in connection with the stabbing.

New York City Police wouldn't immediately confirm whether anyone was in custody.

Top state officials, including Governor Andrew Cuomo and Attorney General Leticia James, released statements condemning the attack.

Photos and videos posted on Twitter showed a large emergency response with paramedics running and pushing stretchers. A number of police and emergency vehicles could



be seen in the images.

The Anti-Defamation League of New York and New Jersey says it's also aware of reports and was at the scene in Monsey.

Monsey is about an hour north of New York City.

The Orthodox Jewish Public Affairs Council for the

Hudson Valley region tweeted reports that the stabbings took place at the house of a Hasidic rabbi while they were celebrating Hanukkah.

Several state and local officials have described the location of the stabbing as a synagogue. The rabbi's home is next door to a synagogue.

Saturday was the seventh night of Hanukkah.

Cuomo, who called the stabbings a "cowardly act"

has directed the State Police hate crimes task force to investigate the attacks.

"Let me be clear: anti-

AP
Police work at a residence in Monsey, N.Y., early Sunday, Dec. 29, 2019, following a stabbing Saturday during a Hanukkah celebration.

Semitism and bigotry of any kind are repugnant to our values of inclusion and diversity and we have absolutely zero tolerance for such acts of hate," he said in Saturday's statement. "In New York we will always stand up and say with one voice to anyone who wishes to divide and spread fear: you do not represent New York and your actions will not go unpunished."

Weidel said the five people were taken to hospitals for treatment. It is unclear what the extent of their injuries were. Authorities have not provided a motive for the attack.

The stabbings occurred a month after a man was stabbed while walking to a Monsey synagogue. The man required surgery. It's unknown if the person suspected in that stabbing has been arrested.

NYC over 300 killings, but not all were in '19

NEW YORK (AP)—New York City's annual homicide total has surpassed 300 for the first time since 2016, fueled by pockets of gang violence, a pair of quadruple killings and an unusual number of book-keeping adjustments.

Through Dec. 22, the city has tallied 311 homicides, compared with 290 at the same point last year.

It's the second straight year of increases after the city achieved a modern-era low of 292 homicides in 2017, but this year's total is skewed in part by an outsized number of deaths carried over from years past.

At least 27 deaths in this year's statistics happened prior to 2019 but weren't classified as homicides by the city's medical examiner until this year, the police department said. They must be counted in the statistics for the year the death certificate is issued.

There were half as many re-classifications counted in last year's statistics.

Through the end of November, the city tallied 272 homicides involving people killed this year, Deputy Chief Lori

Pollock said. At the same time last year, there were 275.

"We don't like to talk about it because it's fairly consistent through the years, but this one happens to be—it hasn't happened since 2006 where you had this many classifications over the year before," Pollock said.

New York finished last year with 295 homicides, down from 335 in 2016. The recent tallies are a far cry from the early 1990s, when the city averaged about 2,000 killings a year.

New York, the nation's largest city, with about 8.6 million residents, has a homicide rate of about 3.6 per 100,000. That makes it statistically far less deadly than some other big cities.

Philadelphia, which has about 1.6 million residents, had 351 homicides as of Friday, for a rate of about 22 per 100,000. Chicago, which has about 2.7 million residents, has had 482 killings this year, for a rate of about 17.8 per 100,000.

Fluctuations in crime statistics are expected, criminologist David Kennedy

said, and this year's increase in New York's homicide total shouldn't be seen as evidence of a trend.

"Most of that change itself can be accounted for by a couple of standout incidents," said Kennedy, a professor of criminal justice at John Jay College. "This is well within the absolutely expected fluctuation of what happens with violent crime rates."

Halfway into this year, New York was on pace for its lowest annual homicide total since 1951, but a spate of killings in the second half of the year sent the tally higher.

In October, a homeless man allegedly beat four men to death with a metal pipe as they slept on the Manhattan streets. Days later, four people were killed at a Brooklyn gambling den.

The city's increased homicide total can be traced to spikes in just a few neighborhoods.

In the Crown Heights precinct, where the gambling den was located, there have been 14 killings this year after just two at the same point last year.

ACROSS THE NATION

Doctor charged in 25 deaths sues hospital for defamation

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—An Ohio doctor accused of ordering drug overdoses in the deaths of 25 hospital patients has sued his former employer for defamation, arguing that he did nothing wrong and did not deviate from hospital policy on end-of-life care. Dr. William Husel, who is accused of murder, filed the lawsuit Thursday in Franklin County against the Columbus-area Mount Carmel Health System and its parent organization, Trinity Health Corp. "It would not be an exaggeration to state that Dr. Husel has suffered perhaps the most egregious case of defamation in Ohio's recent history," according to the lawsuit. Patients died from their illnesses, not the administration of fentanyl, a powerful painkiller ordered by Husel, he said in the lawsuit. Husel also claims he received no formal training on hospital procedures from Mount Carmel when he was hired in 2013 as a critical care physician and that he received a doctor of the year award in 2014. Husel's lawsuit seeks more than \$50,000 in damages, along with attorney fees. Mount Carmel and Trinity Health responded Saturday with a statement calling Husel's allegations "unfounded." "We completed an extensive review of patient care provided by Dr. William Husel and stand by our decisions," the statement said.

Texas man arrested in stabbing death of his sister

PFLUGERVILLE, Texas (AP)—A former University of Texas at San Antonio football player has been arrested and charged in the fatal stabbing of his sister at a home north of Austin. The Travis County sheriff's office says 25-year-old Michael Egwuagu was charged with murder in the Friday killing of his sister in Pflugerville. The sheriff's office has not yet

released the name of his sister, who authorities say was stabbed multiple times. She died at the scene. Sheriff's office spokeswoman Kristen Dark says authorities were told the victim was pregnant but they are waiting on an autopsy to confirm that. Egwuagu, who was from Pflugerville, was being held Saturday in Travis County jail. Jail records do not yet list a bond amount. The records also don't list an attorney for him. Egwuagu played safety at UTSA from 2013-16.

US astronaut sets record for longest spaceflight by a woman

A U.S. astronaut set a record Saturday for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, breaking the old mark of 288 days with about two months left in her mission. Christina Koch, a 40-year-old electrical engineer from Livingston, Montana, arrived at the International Space Station on March 14. She broke the record set by former space station commander Peggy Whitson in 2016-2017. Koch is expected to spend a total of 328 days, or nearly 11 months, on board the space station before returning to Earth. Missions are typically six months, but NASA announced in April that it was extending her mission until February. The U.S. record for longest space flight is 340 days set by Scott Kelly in 2015-2016. The world record is 15 months set in the 1990s by a Russian cosmonaut aboard the former Mir space station. Koch's extended mission will help NASA learn about the effects of long spaceflights, data that NASA officials have said is needed to support future deep space exploration missions to the Moon and Mars. Before breaking the endurance record for a woman in space, Koch set another milestone as part of the first all-female spacewalking team in October. It was Koch's fourth spacewalk. She previously said she took a lot of helpful advice from Kelly's 2017 autobiography "Endurance." (AP)

Asia

Christmas typhoon leaves 28 dead, 12 missing in PH

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A strong typhoon that barreled through the central Philippines left at least 28 dead and 12 missing, and forced thousands to flee their homes, devastating Christmas celebrations in the predominantly Roman Catholic country.

Typhoon Phanfone stranded many people in sea and airports at the peak of holiday travel, set off landslides, flooded low-lying villages, destroyed houses, downed trees and electrical poles and knocked out power in entire provinces. One disaster response officer described the battered coastal town of Batad in Iloilo province as a “ghost town” on Christmas Day.

“You can’t see anybody because there was a total blackout, you can’t hear anything. The town looked like a ghost town,” Cindy Ferrer of the regional Office of the Civil Defense said by phone.

The storm weakened as it blew into the South China Sea with sustained winds of 120 kilometers (74 miles) per hour and gusts of 150 kph (93 mph), after lashing island after island with fierce winds and pounding rain on Christmas Day, the weather agency said.

Most of the deaths reported by police and local officials were due to drowning, falling trees and accidental electrocution.

Thousands of koalas feared dead in Australia wildfires

PERTH, Australia (AP)—Thousands of koalas are feared to have died in a wildfire-ravaged area north of Sydney, further diminishing Australia’s iconic marsupial, while the fire danger increased in the country’s east on Saturday as temperatures soared.

The mid-northern coast of New South Wales was home to up to 28,000 koalas, but wildfires have significantly reduced their population in recent months. Koalas are native to Australia and are one of the country’s most beloved animals, but they’ve been under threat due to a loss of habitat.

“Up to 30% of their habitat has been destroyed,” Australia’s environment minister, Sussan Ley, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. “We’ll know more when the fires are calmed down and a proper assessment can be made.”

Images shared of koalas drinking water after being rescued from the wildfires have gone viral on social media in recent days. “I get mail from all around the world from people absolutely moved and amazed by our wildlife volun-



Residents walks beside an outrigger and playground equipment that were damaged by Typhoon Phanfone along a coastline in Ormoc city, central Philippines on Thursday Dec. 26, 2019.

A father, his three children and another relative were among those missing in hard-hit Iloilo province after a swollen river inundated their shanty.

The typhoon slammed into Eastern Samar province on Christmas Eve and then plowed across the archipelago’s central region on Christmas, slamming into seven coastal towns and island provinces without losing power.

Provincial officials, army troops, police and volunteers spent Christmas away from home to tend to thousands of displaced residents in town

gymnasiums and schools turned into emergency shelters. Many more people spent Christmas Eve, traditionally a time for family reunions, in bus terminals.

More than 25,000 people were stranded in sea ports across the central region and outlying provinces after the coast guard prohibited ferries and cargo ships from venturing into dangerously choppy

waters. Dozens of international and domestic flights to and from the region were canceled, including to popular beach and surfing resorts.

About 20 typhoons and storms batter the Philippines each year. The Southeast Asian nation is also located in the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” where earthquakes and volcanic eruptions often occur, making the country of more than 100 mil-

lion people one of the world’s most disaster prone.

Phanfone, a Laotian word for animal, traveled along a path similar to that of Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most ferocious storms on record, which left more than 7,300 people dead and missing, flattened entire villages, swept ships inland and displaced more than 5 million people in the central Philippines in 2013.

New South Wales declares a seven-day state of emergency as heat and wind fan more than 100 wildfires.



teer response and also by the habits of these curious creatures,” Ley said.

About 5 million hectares (12.35 million acres) of land have burned nationwide during the wildfire crisis, with nine people killed and more than 1,000 homes destroyed.

Fire danger in New South

Wales and the Australian Capital Territory was upgraded to “severe” on Saturday, as high temperatures built up over the region. Sydney’s western suburbs reached 41 degrees Celsius (106 Fahrenheit), while the inner city is expected to hit 31 C (88 F) on Sunday before reaching 35 C (95 F) on Tuesday.

Two wildfires in New South Wales are at the “watch and act” level issued by fire services.

Canberra, Australia’s capital, peaked at 38 C (100 F) on Saturday, with oppressive temperatures forecast for the next seven days.

Meanwhile, New South Wales Emergency Services Minister David Elliott has gone on an overseas family vacation in the wake of Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s much-criticized family trip to Hawaii.

Morrison, who apologized for going away, eventually cut short his vacation and returned to Sydney last weekend.

Elliott said he will be briefed daily while overseas. “If the bushfire situation should demand it, I will return home without hesitation,” he said.

N Korea begins key meeting before year-end deadline for US

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea has opened a high-profile political conference to discuss how to overcome “harsh trials and difficulties,” state media reported Sunday, days before a year-end deadline set by Pyongyang for Washington to make concessions in nuclear negotiations.

The ruling Workers’ Party meeting is a focus of keen attention as some observers predict North Korea might use the conference to announce it would abandon faltering diplomacy with the U.S. and lift its moratorium on major weapons test.

The Korean Central News Agency reported that leader Kim Jong Un presided over a plenary meeting of the party’s Central Committee convened in Pyongyang on Saturday. It called the gathering the “first-day session,” suggesting it would continue for at least another day.

The meeting is intended to “overcome the manifold and harsh trials and difficulties and further accelerate the development of the revolution with transparent anti-imperialist independent stand and firm will,” KCNA said.

The meeting will also discuss “important matters” in the party and national defense, KCNA said.

KCNA said Kim made a speech on overall state affairs and the work of the Central Committee, but gave no further details.

In April 2018, at the start of nuclear talks with the U.S., North Korea held the same Workers’ Party meeting and announced it would suspend nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests and shift its national focus to developing the economy.

After his second summit with President Donald Trump in February in Vietnam failed, Kim gave the U.S. un-

til the end of this year to offer new initiatives to salvage the nuclear negotiations. North Korea has recently warned that its resumption of tests of long-range missiles and nuclear devices depends on U.S. action.

Restarting nuclear and ICBM tests would be a blow to Trump, who has boasted that North Korea’s moratorium was a major foreign policy win. But that would also likely completely derail diplomacy with the U.S. and further dim the prospect for North Korea to get badly needed sanctions relief to rebuild its troubled economy, some experts said.

North Korea is pushing to win major sanctions relief in return for limited denuclearization steps, but the U.S. maintains sanctions will stay in place until North Korea takes significant steps toward ridding itself of nuclear weapons and technology.

World

Truck bomb in Somali capital kills at least 79 at rush hour

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—A truck bomb exploded at a busy security checkpoint in Somalia's capital Saturday morning, killing at least 79 people including many students, authorities said. It was the worst attack in Mogadishu since the devastating 2017 bombing that killed hundreds.

The explosion ripped through rush hour as Somalia returned to work after its weekend. At least 125 people were wounded, Aamin Ambulance service director Abdiqadir Abdulrahman said, and hundreds of Mogadishu residents donated blood in response to desperate appeals.

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed condemned the attack as a "heinous act of terror" and blamed the local al-Shabab extremist group, which is linked to al-Qaida and whose reach has extended to deadly attacks on luxury malls and schools in neighboring Kenya.

Bodies lay on the ground amid the blackened skeletons of vehicles. At a hospital, families and friends picked through dozens of the dead, gingerly lifting sheets to peer at faces.

Most of those killed were



A truck carries wreckage of a car used in a car bomb in Mogadishu, Somalia, Saturday, Dec. 28, 2019. AP

university students returning to class and police officers, said Somalia's police chief Gen. Abdi Hassan Hajar. He said the vehicle detonated after police at the checkpoint blocked it from proceeding into the city.

Somalis mourned the deaths of so many young people in a country trying to rebuild itself after decades of conflict. Two Turkish brothers were among the dead, Somalia's foreign minister said, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan condemned the attack.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but al-Shabab often carries out such attacks. The extremist group was pushed out of Mogadishu

several years ago but continues to target high-profile areas such as checkpoints and hotels in the seaside city.

Al-Shabab is now able to make its own explosives, its "weapon of choice," United Nations experts monitoring sanctions on Somalia said earlier this year. The group had previously relied on military-grade explosives captured during assaults on an African Union peacekeeping force.

Despite that advance in bomb-making, one security expert said the unlikely choice of target Saturday—a checkpoint at the western entrance to the capital—reflected al-Shabab's weakening capability to plan and execute attacks at will. Mogadishu recently introduced tougher security measures that Somali officials said make it more difficult to smuggle in explosives.

"It feels like they literally

knew that their (car bomb) may not proceed through the checkpoint into the city undetected, considering the additional obstacles ahead, so bombing the busy checkpoint in a show of strength appeared to be an ideal decision," the Mogadishu-based Ahmed Barre told The Associated Press.

Al-Shabab was blamed for the truck bombing in Mogadishu in October 2017 that killed more than 500 people, but the group never claimed responsibility for the blast that led to widespread public outrage. Some analysts said al-Shabab didn't dare claim credit as its strategy of trying to sway public opinion by exposing government weakness had badly backfired.

"This explosion is similar like the one ... in 2017. This one occurred just a few steps away from where I am and it knocked me on the ground from its force. I have never seen such an explosion in my entire life," witness Abdurrahman Yusuf said.

The attack again raises concern about the readiness of Somali forces to take over responsibility for the Horn of Africa country's security in the coming months from the AU force.

Libyan official: Turkish troops unwanted, destabilizing

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP)—Turkey's willingness to dispatch troops to Libya is "unacceptable" and such a move would constitute unwanted meddling in the affairs of a friendly country, the speaker of the North African country's parliament said Saturday.

Aguila Saleh said in a joint statement with his Cypriot counterpart that Turkey's actions are increasing tensions and destabilizing the region.

Saleh and Cypriot parliamentary speaker Demetris Syllouris also reiterated their condemnation of a maritime border agreement that Turkey signed with Libya's Tripoli-based government—but which hasn't been ratified by the Libyan parliament—as a "flagrant violation of international law that's devoid of any legal basis."

According to the Cyprus News Agency, Saleh said Prime Minister Faye Sarraj isn't authorized to sign any agreements on his own because any such deal requires unanimous approval from the nine-member presidential council and parliament's assent.

Sarraj is battling an offensive launched in April by the rival government based in

eastern Libya and forces loyal to commander Gen. Khalifa Hifter, who is trying to take Tripoli, the capital.

The fighting has threatened to plunge Libya into violence rivaling the 2011 conflict that ousted and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

Speaking through an interpreter, Saleh said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan took advantage of the divisions within Libya, as well as Tripoli's control by "terrorist groups," to get the agreements approved.

According to Saleh, Erdogan's aim "is to provoke countries in the eastern Mediterranean and to interfere in their exclusive economic zones without taking account these countries' sovereign rights at sea and in the air."

A senior Cypriot government official told The Associated Press that Saleh asked European Union member Cyprus to convey to the 28-member bloc that deployment of Turkish forces in his country would destabilize the entire region. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he's not authorized to disclose details of the Libyan official's visit.

WORLD BRIEFS

Death toll in Chile protests since October rises to 27

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)—Chile's human rights watchdog is calling for an investigation into the electrocution death of a man during anti-government protests. The death during clashes between police and protesters on Friday raised the number of those killed during protests that started in October to at least 27. The man who died was 40 years old and was electrocuted after falling into a pit with cables during chaotic street scenes, according to police and local media. The exact circumstances of the man's death should be clarified as soon as possible, Chile's National Institute of Human Rights said. The death happened during a protest in Plaza Italia, a focal point of unrest in the capital of Santiago. The demonstrations started over an increase in the subway fare and eventually encompassed grievances about pensions, education, health care and other issues. Demonstrations are frequently

held on Friday, and a movie theater burned in the latest clashes. Demonstrators made way for firetrucks arriving to fight the blaze at the Alameda Cultural Center, which also has been a staging ground for volunteer medics who treat injured demonstrators. Firefighters said the building was badly damaged and the cause would be investigated.

Ukraine, separatists expected to swap prisoners on Sunday

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Kyiv expects to swap prisoners with Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine on Sunday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday. The exchange was brokered by the Russian and Ukrainian presidents at peace talks in Paris earlier this month. Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin in their first meeting failed to find a compromise to end the five-year war that has killed 14,000 people, but agreed to revive the peace process and exchange prisoners. "The

exchange should be tomorrow. We're all waiting for it," Zelenskyy said Saturday, calling it "the most difficult task this year." Separatist officials confirmed the exchange was to take place Sunday and said they expected to swap 55 Ukrainians for 87 rebels. Earlier this week Ukrainian media reported that a court in Odessa released 11 people accused of terrorism in preparation for the exchange. Four others were released from jail in Kharkiv on Saturday. The last major prisoner swap between separatist rebels and Ukrainian forces took place in December 2017, with 233 rebels exchanged for 73 Ukrainians.

Thousands march in Paris to protest pension reform plan

PARIS (AP)—Thousands of protesters opposed to the French government's plan to revamp the retirement system marched through Paris on Saturday, the 24th day of crippling strikes. In an unusual gesture, unions organizing the march asked yellow vest

protesters to join them. The march coincided with the 59th consecutive Saturday of marches by the yellow vest movement that seeks social and economic justice. Brief scuffles marred the union march as individuals, some wearing masks, burned construction materials along the route. The march went from the Gare du Nord train station to Chatelet in central Paris. "Whatever the color of the vest, we must stick together," the leader of the hard-left CGT union Philippe Martinez said on BFMTV, referring to the several hundred yellow vests who joined the march. President Emmanuel Macron wants to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 and rid the complex system of 42 special categories, notably railway and bus and Metro employees, with their own rules. The strikes have disrupted transport across France and beyond, hobbling Paris Metros and trains across the country as well as businesses. The strikes have been especially felt over the holiday season.

Health & Wellness

This advertorial
is sponsored by



Tan Siu Lin
Foundation



Toni White, center, leads her class in a series of high-energy moves on Nov. 7, 2019. The Boom Shake fitness class, created by White, combines dance moves and music with strengthening.

ULYSSES MUOZ/BALTIMORE SUN/TNS

How this busy mom developed her own dance fitness program

By VALERIE BONK
THE BALTIMORE SUN

Shedding extra weight was daunting for Angela Norris, 54, of Laurel.

So when she heard about a new dance fitness class at her gym about nine years ago, she decided to give it a try.

"My first impression was that this

instructor was not just doing dance fitness," Norris said. "It was easy to follow and you really felt like you were getting a full-body workout and not just cardio."

The class is Boom Shake Fitness, and it was trademarked in 2016 by Columbia resident Toni White, presi-

dent of Aspiring Motivations, Inc.

White, now 49, was an athlete when she was younger but when she started raising children she had trouble finding time for fitness.

"Life got busy with three children by age 22, and there was no time to work out and focus on fitness," White

said. "In 2007, I became a caregiver for my two elderly and disabled parents and it was one of the most difficult times of my life. In that moment, I decided that I needed to take control of my health, lose weight and make better choices."

She started taking fitness classes

and then realized that she felt that there was "something missing" and that she wanted to pursue her passion for exercising further.

Boom Shake is "for those who are looking for strength in their workout plan but don't want to do a bunch of burpees," White said. "It's fitness-focused, but to music."

White created all of the original choreography—set to country, rock, Portuguese, reggae and other styles of music—with a focus on burning fat and chiseling muscles with cardio boxing movements that include elbows, knees, punches and cross-body combinations without having to go all the way down to complete floor exercises.

"We created all of our moves to maximize results while standing on our feet," said White, who also started an instructor training program for people to become certified to teach the Boom Shake classes.

Classes are held at Boom Shake's Dobbin Road headquarters; at Retro Fitness in Catonsville; and through employee wellness programs, church partnerships and community events.

With a total of 22 instructors, Boom Shake recently expanded to West Virginia and is looking to grow further. White is also working on creating downloadable instructional videos for those looking to bring Boom Shake classes to their area.

Norris is now a certified instructor and has lost 50 pounds since starting Boom Shake. She teaches two classes a week and takes class herself around four to five times per week. She is a pharmaceutical representative and said that the class works well with her lifestyle.

"I feel crazy when I don't take class," Norris said. "I sit in the car all day and I spend a lot of time standing in a doctor's office waiting. With Boom Shake, it makes working out fun at the end of a long day."

Goodbye, stressful diets? Intermittent fasting offers health benefits, study says. But it's not for everybody

By KRISTIN LAM
TNS

Trading holiday feasts for intermittent fasting could yield health benefits from lower cholesterol to reduced stress, according to a new study.

The dieting method requires patience, researchers wrote in a review published Thursday in the New England Journal of Medicine, but doctors can help patients reach the scientifically-proven benefits or warn at-risk groups to avoid it.

While intermittent fasting diets vary, the practices of alternating between certain periods of eating and not eating fall into two categories, said co-author Mark Mattson, a neuroscience professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. One restricts eating to six to eight hours

per day and another limits people to one moderate-sized meal two days each week.

The eating patterns can increase resistance to stress and improve blood sugar regulation, while decreasing blood pressure, blood lipid levels and resting heart rates, Mattson wrote. Multiple studies on humans and animals have reported those results, he said, bringing legitimacy to the practice.

"We are at a transition point where we could soon consider adding information about intermittent fasting to medical school curricula alongside standard advice about healthy diets and exercise," Mattson said in a release statement.

Even so, committing to intermittent fasting for the long periods of time is often difficult, said Dr. Guy

L. Mintz, director of cardiovascular health and lipidology at Sandra Atlas Bass Heart Hospital in New York. Some studies show patients eating more than recommended on fasting days and less on feast days, said Mintz, who did not participate in the review.

Mintz also urged certain groups to avoid intermittent fasting, including patients who are not overweight. Most clinical studies have worked with overweight young and middle-aged adults, the study said, so more trials on other ages are required.

"Intermittent fasting may not be a good diet for diabetic patients on medications and/or insulin that could have swings in blood sugar," Mintz said. "Intermittent fasting is not for older patients. Hypoglycemia needs to be watched, which can lead to falls."

The diet works, Mattson wrote, by changing a person's metabolism similarly to how humans adapt to times of food scarcity. The body uses up its sugar stores, which metabolize quickly, and slowly converts fats into energy.

Scientists have also observed these eating patterns and metabolism changes in natural animal behavior, said Dr. Gerald Bernstein, program coordinator at the Friedman Diabetes Institute of Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

"Certain birds will change their beak depending on rainfall, said Bernstein, who did not participate in the study. "The beak of these birds will change to meet the height of the plant growth; less rain, big beak; more rain, small beak."

The changes over time may al-

ter the DNA of a bird, which could explain the benefits of intermittent fasting, said Bernstein.

Other preliminary trials have suggested intermittent fasting for animals can delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease and suppress the growth of cancerous tumors, but the study said further research is required. In the meantime, the authors concluded it is unlikely that intermittent fasting will be practiced widely in the United States.

"A diet of three meals with snacks every day is so ingrained in our culture that a change in this eating pattern will rarely be contemplated by patients or doctors," the study said. "The abundance of food and extensive marketing in developed nations are also major hurdles to be overcome."

Life & Style

Los Angeles prosecutors reviewing 8 cases against Weinstein



This Dec. 6, 2019 file photo shows Harvey Weinstein, center, leaving court following a bail hearing in New York.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Prosecutors in Los Angeles are reviewing eight cases accusing disgraced film mogul Harvey Weinstein of sexual assault, an official said Thursday.

The Los Angeles and Beverly Hills police departments each brought four investigations to prosecutors, according to Ricardo Santiago, a spokesman for the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office.

The office will decide whether to move forward with prosecution. No charges have been filed, Santiago said. He did not know details about the allegations or when the cases were presented to prosecutors.

Juda Engelmayer, Weinstein’s publicist, said he had “nothing to add right now” in an email to The Associated Press.

District Attorney Jackie Lacey created a task force more than two years ago to handle the surge in sexual misconduct allegations against entertainment figures after the accusations against Weinstein launched the #MeToo movement. He has denied allegations of nonconsensual sex.

No charges have been filed against 22 men—including

Weinstein, actor Kevin Spacey, director James Toback and former CBS CEO Leslie Moonves—who were the focus of the task force’s investigations. All of them have denied wrongdoing.

Charges have already been rejected for most, mainly because the statute of limitations had expired or there was insufficient evidence.

Dozens of women, including actresses Gwyneth Paltrow, Angelina Jolie, Lupita Nyong’o and Ashley Judd, have accused Weinstein of sexual harassment, while actresses Asia Argento, Rose McGowan and others have accused the Oscar winner of raping them.

Weinstein is scheduled to stand trial Jan. 6 in New York on charges he raped a woman in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013 and performed a forcible sex act on a different woman in 2006. He has pleaded not guilty and says any sexual activity was consensual.

A tentative global settlement reached this month would split \$25 million among more than two dozen of Weinstein’s accusers. The deal wouldn’t require him to pay anything out of his own pocket and he wouldn’t have to admit wrongdoing.

Last week, a former model who accused him of sexually abusing her when she was 16 filed a new lawsuit, saying the tentative settlement wasn’t “fair or just.” Kaja Sokola sued under New York’s Child Victims Act, which gives people a one-year window to sue over sexual abuse that they say they endured as children.

Don Imus, made and betrayed by his mouth, is dead at 79

NEW YORK (AP)—Radio personality Don Imus, whose career was made and then undone by his acid tongue during a decades-long rise to stardom and an abrupt public plunge after a nationally broadcast racial slur, has died. He was 79.

Imus died Friday morning at Baylor Scott and White Medical Center in College Station, Texas, after being hospitalized since Christmas Eve, according to a statement issued by his family. Deirdre, his wife of 25 years, and his son Wyatt, 21, were at his side, with his son Zachary Don Cates returning from military service overseas.

He died of complications from lung disease.

Imus survived drug and alcohol woes, a raunchy appearance before President Clinton and several firings during his long career behind the microphone. But he was vilified and eventually fired after describing a women’s college basketball team as “nappy headed hos.”

His April 2007 racist and misogynist crack about the mostly black Rutgers squad,

an oft-replayed 10-second snippet, crossed a line that Imus had long straddled as his irascible rants catapulted him to prominence. The remark was heard coast to coast on 60 radio stations and on a simulcast aired each morning on MSNBC.

At the time, his “Imus in the Morning” show was home to presidential hopefuls, political pundits and his favorite musicians, a must-listen in the media and political corridors of New York and Washington. Ten years earlier, Time magazine had named him one of the 25 most influential Americans. But the remark made him an immediate pariah and he was dropped by CBS Radio and MSNBC.

Imus apologized repeatedly, calling his remark “completely inappropriate ... thoughtless and stupid,” and met with the team to hear how his comment hurt them. Although he returned to radio, and the Fox Business Network simulcast his show for a number of years, he never approached the same influence before retiring in 2018.



Imus

IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE
†Victoria Maria Nugam Camacho

Lovingly known as “Vickie”
Born to life: April 3, 1960 | Called to Eternal Life: December 25, 2019

In her Eternal life, she now joins:

- Father: †Ignatio Nugam
- Mother: †Teresita Marfel
- Father-in-Law: †Ignacio C. Camacho
- Mother-in-Law: †Dolores S.N. Camacho
- Siblings: †Peter Tithrow, †Sylvester Nugam, †John P. Nugam
- Brother-in-Law: †Francisco S.N. Camacho

Her beautiful spirit and memories will forever live in the hearts of:

- Promise Mother: Bertina Limuk
- Husband: David S.N. Camacho
- Children: †Roger N. Camacho (Ritaann Mae, David Julian, Maryann Raylene, Daviann Juana), Rhonda C./Nicholas J. Gross (Victoria Jade, Phoenix Sapphire, Beatrice Pearl, Windsor Amethyst, Carver Javid), Kelly N. Camacho/ Lina A. Lifoifo (Torinett Marie (Eden Nevaeh), Kevin Joshua, Zion Stone, Zack Blaze, Zeph Rootz), Daverrick N. Camacho/ Gina M. (Devin Gage, Giovonni Dru, Dezmon Gabriel, Giulian Drake), Victorette N. Camacho/ Jonathan T. Blas (Nathanette Marie, Davierrin Tamiica), Zyerlishida N. Camacho, Cozryanamae N. Camacho/ Floyd M. Mendiola (Ymani Darieus)

- Reared Children: Geneca T. Aguon, John Yifith, Gigo C. Tomokane, Sylvestria I. Nugam

Our beloved Victoria is survived by numerous siblings, brothers and sisters-in-law, godchildren, aunties, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Daily mass of intention for the repose of her soul is being celebrated:

- Saturday: San Antonio Parish @ 6pm
- Sunday: San Antonio Parish @ 8am
- Monday: Saint Jude Parish @ 6pm
- Tuesday: San Antonio Parish @ 6pm
- Wednesday: San Antonio Parish @ 8am

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, January 2, 2020. At 7:30am, after the viewing by immediate family members, her remains will be escorted from the Borja Funeral Home to San Antonio Parish. Responso Service and prayers will take place upon arrival. Mass of Christian Burial at 10am followed by Interment Services at the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery where she will be peacefully laid to rest.

Un dangkulu na si yu’us ma’ase
David S.N. Camacho & Children



Innovative fashion designers lead the way on Sustainability

By LIZZIE KNIGHT
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON (AP)—Innovative fashion designers are turning to such things as horseradish and nettles to make sustainable clothing and accessories to the delight of a growing number of buyers.

While more consumers are paying closer attention to how the production of goods impacts the environment, old habits die hard. A buy-and-toss mentality persists despite a boost from celebrities helping to drive the upcycle and vintage movements.

Actress Maggie Q, who created an activewear line from recycled fabrics, is among activists who see plenty of room for improvement. She says she feels “sick about fast fashion.”

“You hear people say, ‘Well, it was cheap and you need to wear it once, you throw it away,’” she said.

The British design duo behind Vin + Omi, a brand worn by Michelle Obama, Beyonce and Lady Gaga, is forever on the hunt for creative solutions to sustainability. They sourced latex from Malaysia, for example. However, they found the conditions for plantation workers appalling and bought

the operation.

At their studios in the Cotswolds, in the heart of the English countryside, they grow a range of crops and plants for textile development, including chestnuts and horseradish. Their latest collection features garments made from nettles, alpaca fleece and recycled plastic from paint tubes. English designer Zoe Corsellis keeps the carbon footprint of her garments low by manufacturing them in London, with fabrics sourced in the U.K. and Germany. She makes them from wood pulp, sea waste and peace silk, considered more humane to silk worms than traditional production processes. A wood pulp gown feels like jersey to the touch.

Belgian designer Sebastiaan de Neubourg is recycling plastic bottles, car dashboards and refrigerators for sunglasses for his brand, W.R.YUMA. Plastic waste is collected and shredded to make 3D printer filament. Transparent frames are made from soda bottles, white ones from refrigerators and black ones from car dashboards.

“Waste, I believe, is design failure,” he said. Fee Gilfeather, sustainability expert at the

nonprofit Oxfam, said there’s hope on a larger scale.

“The textile industry is getting close to working out how to do fiber-to-fiber recycling,” she said. “So what that means is that when you take a garment that’s no longer needed, you can break it down into the fibers and turn that back into a raw material to make clothing.”

More celebrities are also playing a role, with some turning to vintage.

Amal Clooney, the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle and Kim Kardashian West have been wearing more vintage pieces and re-wearing outfits, something unheard of among many celebrities. Billie Eilish recently wore a custom upcycled outfit from Burberry to the American Music Awards.

“I’m trying to like waste less resources,” the teenage singer said.

Singer Paloma Faith is an old hand at vintage.

“I’ve been wearing - and obsessive about - vintage clothing for my whole life and I feel like it’s really an important thing to recycle and reuse, not just because the ideas in my view were better from the past, but also because we



CHRISTOPHE MORRE/W.R.YUMA VIA AP

This combination of photos released by w.r.yuma shows Belgian designer Sebastiaan de Neubourg, left, and a collection of frames made from recycled materials. De Neubourg uses recycled plastic bottles, car dashboards and refrigerators for sunglasses for his brand, w.r.yuma.

can’t just keep contributing to the landfill, and we have to take a bit or more responsibility,” she said.

For more than a decade, designer Stella McCartney has been in the sustainability fight. Her latest collection was her most sustainable yet, using organic cotton, recycled poly-

ester, sustainable viscose and traceable wool.

“It’s really important to me that you shouldn’t notice that what I do is more ethical than other houses,” she said. “You should just love it and want it and then the desirability means it comes into your life, and it means that other busi-

nesses have to change.”

Brands that have heavily used fur in the past have reconsidered. Burberry, Gucci and Versace are among high-end houses opting for faux fur. Many others, including Chanel and Victoria Beckham, will no longer use exotic animal skins.

Judge: No slander in Alec Baldwin’s comments on parking spat

NEW YORK (AP)—Alec Baldwin didn’t slander a man in interviews about a parking dispute that turned physical, a judge has ruled as dueling lawsuits between the actor and the other driver continue.

Baldwin’s remarks—including claims that Wojciech Cieszkowski’s driving was “really fast,” “really aggressive” and made the actor think his wife and son were about to be run over—were “hyperbole” and “rhetorical illustrations,” Manhattan judge David B. Cohen wrote Thursday.

“They are words of frustration with someone’s driving,” not accusations that amount to slander, Cohen wrote.

He tossed out Cieszkowski’s slander claim, but his assault and battery allegations can proceed toward trial.

“The heart of the case will now move ahead,” said Doug Lieb, one of Cieszkowski’s attorneys. “We look forward to holding Mr. Baldwin accountable in court.”

Baldwin’s lawyers, Luke Nikas and Alex Spiro, said Friday they were pleased with the decision.

The Emmy Award-winning actor pleaded guilty to harassment in the November 2018

confrontation. He went on to file a defamation suit of his own against Cieszkowski, a contractor.

The two clashed over a parking spot outside Baldwin’s Manhattan apartment building. Cieszkowski said Baldwin hit him in the face, causing him “substantial pain” and headaches. Baldwin has said he “lightly pushed Cieszkowski in the chest” but did not seriously injure him.

Baldwin initially faced a misdemeanor attempted assault charge, but it was dropped. Harassment is a violation, the lowest level of offense.

After pleading guilty and agreeing to take an anger-management class, Baldwin commented on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” and “The Howard Stern Show.”

“Did I have an argument with the guy? Yeah. I thought he was going to run over my wife with his car when he was stealing my parking spot,” he said on “Ellen.”

He similarly told Stern that he feared Cieszkowski “was going to hit my wife and my son” as the contractor “just went zip!—really fast and really ag-



Baldwin

gressive” in taking the parking space.

“I thought what he did was impolite, bordering on dangerous,” Baldwin said.

Cieszkowski said through his lawsuit that he never imperiled anyone. Baldwin’s remarks essentially, and falsely, accused him of such crimes as reckless endangerment, he said.

For his part, Baldwin argues in court papers that Cieszkowski defamed him by falsely accusing him of a violent assault.

Baldwin has gotten into a number of public dust-ups over the years.

He was arrested in 1995 after being accused of slugging a photographer in Los Angeles, and he was thrown off a plane in 2011 after arguing with a flight attendant who asked him to stop playing a cellphone game.

Three years later, Baldwin was arrested in New York, where police said he became belligerent after being stopped for bicycling the wrong way on a one-way street. That case was eventually tossed out.

Ex-Disney actor: Judge in sex crime case has anti-gay bias

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—A former Disney Channel actor charged with trying to have sex with a 13-year-old boy in Salt Lake City contends he can’t get a fair trial because the judge handling his case is biased against gay people.

An attorney for actor Stoney Westmoreland said in court documents filed last month that U.S. District Judge Howard Nielson Jr. is incapable of being impartial because he represented proponents of a gay marriage ban in California when he was a private attorney, the Deseret News reports. Nielson argued then that being gay is a choice and people can become heterosexual via conversion therapy, defense attorney Wendy Lewis wrote

in court documents.

Judge Nielson refuted the notion and denied Westmoreland’s request for him to recuse himself from the case. He said views of his clients don’t represent his own opinions.

“I can state categorically and unequivocally that I do not harbor any personal bias or prejudice concerning Mr. Westmoreland,” Nielson wrote in his order denying the motion earlier this month.

Westmoreland was fired from his grandfather role on the made-in-Utah Disney Channel series “Andi Mack” after his December arrest.

Police say Westmoreland, 49, communicated with an undercover officer on the app Grindr and was arrested after

Inuit-Canadian singer who covered ‘Diamonds’ dies at 26

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kelly Fraser, a Canadian pop artist who gained attention for an Inuit-language cover of Rihanna’s “Diamonds,” part of her advocacy efforts for her indigenous culture, has died. Fraser was 26.

Thor Simonsen, Fraser’s friend and producer, said he was told the day after Christmas by the singer-songwriter’s family that she had died. The family declined to release details, including the cause of death, Simonsen said Saturday.

Fraser, who grew up in Sanikiluaq, Nunavut, Canada, and was living in Winnipeg, Manitoba, released “Isuma,” her debut album, in 2014. Her

sophomore album, “Sedna,” came out in 2017 and was nominated for indigenous music album of the year at Canada’s Juno music awards.

When Fraser wrote or translated songs into Inuktitut, an Inuit language, a key aim was to “use pop music as a platform to strengthen her language,” Simonsen said. She also wanted to make the music as accessible to as many people as possible, he said, so she mixed English and Inuktitut in her recordings and blended traditional Inuit sounds and themes with contemporary pop.

A video of her version of “Diamonds” was widely viewed online.

Fraser was “extremely passionate about trying to improve conditions for Inuit people” as well, and wanted to help young people understand the history that contributed to their difficulties, Simonsen said.

In a 2017 statement that accompanied the release of “Sedna,” Fraser said the album’s goal was to heal those suffering from the results of colonization, including the “damaging effects of residential school and forced relocation. There is a great need for Inuit artists to directly speak to those affected from the past.”

She was working on a third album, “Decolonize,” at the time of her death, Simonsen said.



Lizzo named The Associated Press' Entertainer of the Year

NEW YORK (AP)—Breakthrough singer-rapper Lizzo has been named Entertainer of the Year by The Associated Press.

Voted by entertainment staffers of the news cooperative, Lizzo dominated the pop, R&B and rap charts in 2019 with songs like "Truth Hurts" and "Good As Hell." Though

she released her first album in 2013, Lizzo dropped her major-label debut, "Cuz I Love You," this year and the success has made her the leading nominee at the 2020 Grammy Awards, where she is up for eight honors.

Outside of music, Lizzo has won over fans for promoting body positivity and denouncing fat shaming. Her live performances have been revered, and the 31-year-old classically trained flutist grinded as an

independent and touring artist for years. She performed with Prince on his 2014 "Plectrumelectrum" album, released two years before his death.

Lizzo also had a role in the film "Hustlers," opposite Jennifer Lopez, Constance Wu and Cardi B, and she voiced a character in the animated picture "UglyDolls."

Lizzo was also named Entertainer of the Year by Time magazine.

AP
This Sept. 18, 2019 file photo shows Lizzo performing at The Met in Philadelphia. Lizzo has been named Entertainer of the Year by The Associated Press.

Sister of George Michael dies exactly 3 years after he did

LONDON (AP)—One of pop superstar George Michael's sisters has died exactly three years after her brother's Christmas Day death in 2016.

A statement from family lawyer John Reid confirmed the unexpected death of Melanie Panayiotou, 55, on Wednesday and appealed for privacy.

"We can confirm that very tragically Melanie has passed away suddenly," the state-

ment said. "We would simply ask that the family's privacy be respected at this very sad time. There will be no further comment."

London's Metropolitan Police said it received reports of the "sudden death of a woman" in her 50s in north London at around 7:30 p.m. on Christmas Day.

Police said the death is not being treated as suspicious and that a report will be given to the coroner.

Tina Turner mural defaced at North Carolina record store

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (AP)—Employees at a record store in North Carolina say a mural of pop star Tina Turner has been defaced with a red swastika.

The Citizen Times reported Thursday that the mural is outside Static Age Records in downtown Asheville.

Store owner Jesse McSwain said someone unconnected to the store apparently covered the mural in a black sheet before he could address the situation. Static Age called police

and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

McSwain said that his store is "a widely inclusive, safe space" and that "hate speech will get you out the door."

The record store uses its pull-down storefront to honor music legends. They have included Screamin' Jay Hawkins, Lemmy from Motörhead and Lou Reed. Turner's mural was based on her character in the film "Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome."

Whoops! UK publishes celebrity home addresses by mistake

LONDON (AP)—British officials have apologized after mistakenly publishing the home addresses of more than 1,000 people who received special honors including singers Elton John and Olivia Newton-John.

The list also included Oscar-winning film directors, senior politicians and diplomats, popular athletes and people in sensitive defense roles.

The addresses were published online for about an hour late Friday when the Cabinet Office posted the recipients of New Year's Honors, including knighthoods.

"The information was removed as soon as possible," the Cabinet Office said in a statement. "We apologize to all those affected and are looking into how this happened." Officials said the individuals

will be contacted about the error.

The Information Commissioner's Office said it was investigating "in response to reports of a data breach involving the Cabinet Office and the New Year's Honors list." It can impose fines for privacy violations.

Britain's Cabinet Office publishes a list of the people receiving honors for merit, ser-

vice or bravery twice a year: shortly before New Year's Eve and on the Saturday in June when Queen Elizabeth II's birthday is officially observed.

The list included Oscar-winning director Sam Mendes of "American Beauty" and James Bond fame, who was made a knight along Steve McQueen, director of "12 Years a Slave," winner of the Oscar for best picture.

Heirs sue Miami to get back theater grandfather donated

MIAMI (AP)—The heirs of a philanthropist who donated a historic theater to the city of Miami want it back.

A dissolved nonprofit controlled by the heirs of Maurice Gusman sued the city last month in an effort to take control of the Olympia Theater on Flagler Street and restore it to its former glory. They claim city officials have squandered the theater built in 1926 and violated the terms of an agreement with their grandfather.

Gusman donated the theater to the city in 1975. It is one of the oldest theaters in Miami and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

Gusman's agreement with the city required the Miami Parking Authority to manage the property. When the parking authority gave up management of the theater, the city violated the deed and gave up its right to maintain ownership, according to the lawsuit

by the nonprofit.

Tim Barket, an attorney for the family, told the Miami Herald that Gusman deeded the theater to the parking authority because he distrusted politicians and believed the agency was independent of the city.

The impetus of the lawsuit came after a grandson saw an order posted on the theater by city code enforcement to repair or demolish the building.

That was the "last straw" for

the family, Barket said.

The city of Miami has asked a judge to dismiss the lawsuit, saying the dissolved nonprofit belonging to the Gusman heirs doesn't have legal standing to bring the lawsuit and that any claim of a breach in the deed is past the statute of limitations.

The city had been negotiating with Miami Dade College to take over management of the theater, but those talks fizzled.

Talk of previous relationship throws water on current flame

DEAR ABBY: I'm a widower who was very happily married. I have decided to re-enter the dating game. I met a very nice widow, and we connected. As I was lonely, it made a big change for the better in my life. The lady I matched up with is a wonderful, caring person, and we enjoy being together doing what dating folks do. We're thankful to have found each other.

She had met a man she enjoyed being with some years ago, but it was of short duration because he died. She told me they had a nice, but platonic relationship. My problem is how often she speaks about him. Something reminds her of him, and she wants to talk about it. I can understand that he might come up once in a while, but last month she mentioned him a dozen times. I don't think she does it to make me jealous, but I find it annoying.

I tried a few times subtly suggesting it would be better if she didn't mention him. I'm not sure she understands it could undermine our relationship. What to do?

WORRIED WIDOWER IN NEW ENGLAND

DEAR WIDOWER: Address this with your lady friend as frankly as you have to me. If she values the relationship she has with you, she will stop "raising the dead" in conversation.

DEAR ABBY: My sister did something that really bothered me. My niece (her daughter) took us to a restaurant she had

heard was really good. In this restaurant, you order and pay for your meal first. My niece paid for all the meals, and we sat down at our table to await our food.

My niece had to leave the table momentarily before our order was ready. While she was gone, my sister said I should reimburse her daughter because she couldn't afford to pay for all the meals.

I have never mooched off anyone in my life. The \$10 my niece spent is the only time I can remember anyone buying me dinner in my adult life other than on my birthday. My niece has a job that I know for a fact pays at least three times as much as mine does. She has several pets, and I'm sure she spends a lot more a month on pet food than the cost of my meal. I don't think my sister should have made an issue of it. What do you think?

IRRITATED IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR IRRITATED: I agree with you. You were an invited guest and, as well-meaning as your sister may have been, she should have stayed out of it. I hope you will overlook her poor manners.

DEAR ABBY: This past weekend I was walking at the mall and encountered a gentleman in a wheelchair. I was walking down a long, graduated slope as he was coming up. I offered to assist him, and he politely declined.

My question is, what is the proper thing to do when offering

DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



to assist? Is it rude, and is someone offended when offered a helping hand?

JUST TRYING TO HELP

DEAR JUST TRYING: I don't think it is ever offensive to **OFFER** a helping hand. What can be counterproductive is when a good Samaritan does something without first **ASKING**—such as grabbing the arm of a sightless person and attempting to help the individual across a street — which can be not only frightening but possibly unnecessary.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

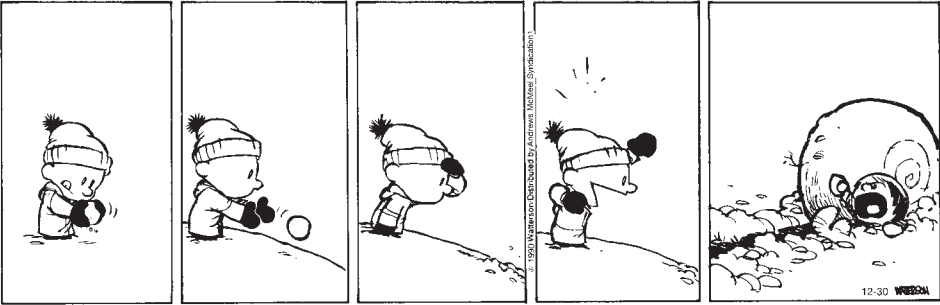
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

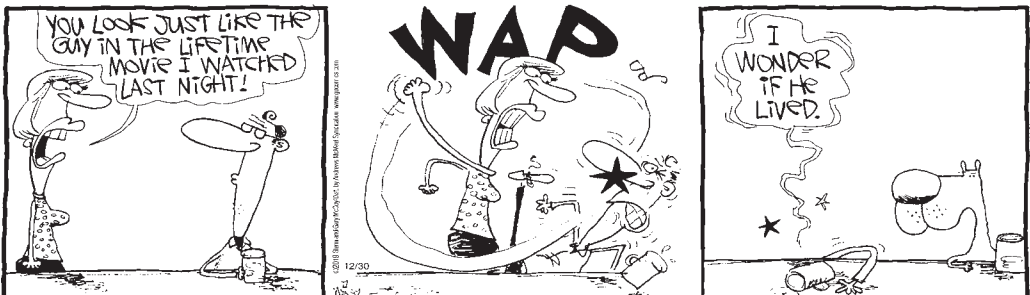


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

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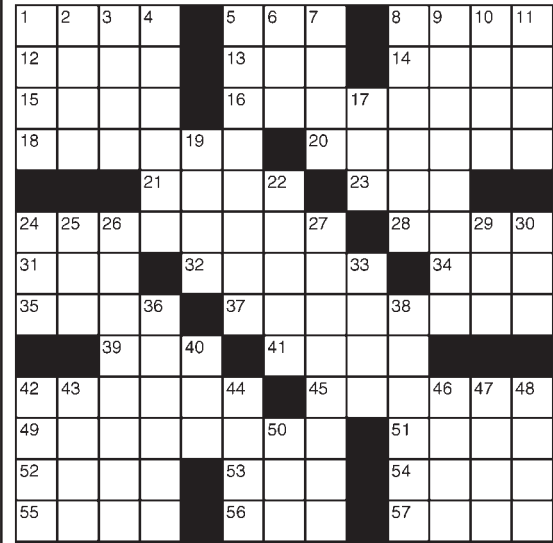
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25 Moving
vehicle
26 Genius
27 Most
skeptical
29 Charged
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30 "Life
of Pi"
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Lee
33 Tizzy
36 Gushes
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38 Slow-
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40 "Rah!"
42 Ms.
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43 Infamous
tsar
44 High
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46 Aspiring
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exam
47 "Would
— to
you?"
48 Shopper's
aid
50 Scot's
refusal

Solution time: 26 mins.

Last Friday's Answer 12/30



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99c per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Eliza Dushku, 39; Tyrese Gibson, 41; Laila Ali, 42; Meredith Vieira, 66.

Happy Birthday: Fix up your place, change your environment, set new goals and aim to be your very best. Turn this into a year of transformation and a time to eliminate problems and strive for perfection, happiness and living life your way. This year will be filled with opportunities if you embrace the positive and put an end to negative influences and toxic relationships. Your numbers are 8, 12, 20, 28, 36, 38, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Keep your plans a secret for the time being. Work diligently behind the scenes to put everything in place before the year comes to a close. A gift or surprise will lift your spirits and give you hope for prospects. 3***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Put your plans in motion. Speak from the heart, and pull the people into your project that you feel have something unique to contribute. Let bygones be bygones, and move forward without regret, anger or emotional baggage. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Whatever you do, keep moving forward. Now is not the time to second-guess your plans or to hold back because you are afraid. Put yourself out there, and continue to focus on what's important to you. Make romance a priority. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Partnerships are essential and best handled with care. Discuss your feelings, and you'll be surprised by the support and suggestions people

offer. Change can be frightening but also exhilarating. Have faith and leap forward. *****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Sit tight until you are sure what your next move should be. Give yourself time to iron out any problems you might face. Take good care of your physical well-being as well as meaningful relationships. Observe rather than participate. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Step up to the podium and say what's on your mind. It's time to take charge and lay out your strategy for the upcoming year. Make personal plans that include travel, pursuits of knowledge and expanding your social life and interests. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't let anyone ruin your plans or your day. Step out with someone who puts a smile on your face and offers sage advice. A pep talk should give you the push you need to bring about positive changes. Romance is encouraged. *****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take better care of your physical and emotional well-being. Refuse to let anyone undermine you. Concentrate on what matters most and how best to go about getting things done to your specifications. Be creative, use your imagination and eliminate problems. **

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Primping and pampering will put you in the mood to party. Making plans with someone special will help you figure out what you want to focus on and how best to go about turning your dream into a reality. Romance is featured. *****

EUGENIA LAST THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Last-minute adjustments will put your mind at ease as you move toward next year. A change of heart will prompt you to revise the way you do things moving forward. An unusual decision may confuse others, but it will improve your life. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Spend more time doing things that make you happy and less time fretting over what others do. Don't get dragged into an emotional dispute, or you will be considered a meddler. Do your own thing. Personal improvement is favored. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Envision what you want in order to make it happen. Your intuition will help you size up situations and people you encounter. A change will turn out to be beneficial if you speak up and make what you want crystal clear. ***

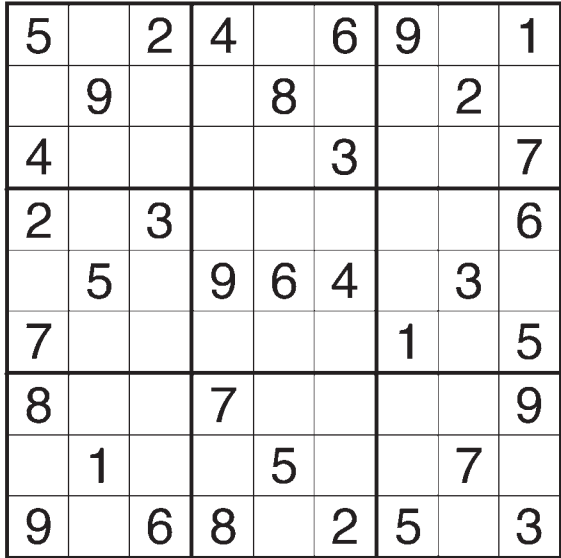
Birthday Baby: You are ambitious, steadfast and optimistic. You are broad-minded and aggressive.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

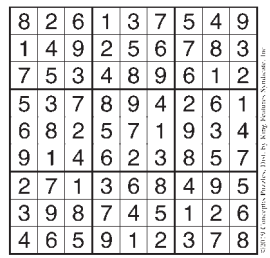


Difficulty Level ★ 12/30

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer



Difficulty Level ★★ 12/30

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

DAHANN CARROLL (1935-2019)

Solution: 15 letters



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Activist, Actress, Angel, August, Awards, Bamford, Beauty, Bess, Blues, Broadway, Bronx, Clara, Claudine, Colbys, Court, Damone, Danny, Daughter, David, DeLeon, Deveraux, Dominique, Dynasty, Frost, Garland, Harlem, Hurry, Jack, John, Jones, Judy, Julia, Mabel, Myrt, Paar, Paris, Porgy, Risk, Robert, Split, Star, Sundown, Suzanne, Sydney, Tony
Last Friday's Answer: Lecture
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**Commonwealth Zoning Board
(Saipan Zoning Office)
JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

Recruitment for Zoning Administrator

The Commonwealth Zoning Board is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Zoning Administrator. This is a full-time position on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Zoning Administrator manages the Zoning Office which is responsible for providing expertise and technical assistance to the Board, managing and processing permit inquiries and applications, maintaining record and data systems, inspecting and enforcing compliance, interpreting the Saipan Zoning Law, educating the public, staffing the Zoning Office, coordinating with government and federal agencies, preparing updates to the Saipan Zoning Law and Board Regulations, preparing and tracking budgets, and preparing reports and grant applications (**see Section 310 of the Saipan Zoning Law of 2013 at www.zoning.gov.mp**).

The minimum requirements for the position are a baccalaureate degree, but preferably a graduate degree, in planning or a related field, and five years of progressive experience in land use planning, comprehensive planning, or land use administration (**CNMI Zoning Code § 7222**). The maximum salary is \$65,000. Health and retirement benefits are provided. Information about the Zoning Board and the Zoning Office may be viewed at the Zoning Board website: www.zoning.gov.mp.

Application submittals should be addressed to Mr. Mariano Taitano, Board Chairman, and must be received at the Zoning Office by **January 7, 2020 at 4:00pm**. Submittals may be sent via e-mail, FAX, US mail or hand delivered to the address below. Submittals must include a letter of interest, a CNMI Application for Employment, and a resume. The Application for Employment may be obtained from the Zoning Office or the Office of Personnel Management. Applicants must be US citizens, permanent residents or their immediate relatives.

Send submittals to:

ATTN: Mr. Mariano Taitano, Board Chairman

Email Acting Administrator: Yubert.Alepuyo@zoning.gov.mp
Fax: (670) 234-9666
US Mail: Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 USA
Hand Deliver to: Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan

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Heat rally past 76ers, win in overtime



MIAMI (AP)—They were down by five points twice in the final two minutes of the fourth quarter. They wasted two chances to win in the last second of regulation, then found themselves trailing on two occasions in overtime.

No problem.

Nothing seems to faze the Miami Heat.

Jimmy Butler had 25 points, nine rebounds and nine assists, plus the go-ahead free throw with 2.3 seconds left in the extra session, and the Heat found a way to beat the Philadelphia 76ers 117-116 on Saturday night to improve to an NBA-best 15-1 at home.

"We never give up," Butler said.

"Yeah, it's crazy," coach Erik Spoelstra said.

"We always fight back," Miami's Goran Dragic said.

Correct on all counts. The Heat moved back into the No. 2 spot in the Eastern Conference and assured themselves of no worse than a split of the four-game regular-season series with Philadelphia—after both teams went through a first in their franchise histories.

Miami, which topped Indiana on Friday, won one-point games on back-to-back days for the first time. Philadelphia, which fell in Orlando on Friday, lost one-point games on back-to-back days for the first time. The last time the 76ers lost consecutive games—ones that weren't on a back-to-back—by exactly one point was in January 1995.

"To do lots of good things and then just at the end to make some plays you wished you had back makes it difficult to swallow," 76ers coach Brett Brown said.

Dragic scored 19, while Tyler Herro and Duncan Robinson each had 16 for Miami. The Heat improved to 6-0 in overtime games and 8-1 in games decided by five points or less.

Joel Embiid had 35 points and 11 rebounds for Philadelphia, which has lost 10 of its last 14 on the road. Former Heat guard Josh Richardson had 17 points in his first time in Miami as an opponent, and Ben Simmons had 15 points and 11 assists.

Butler got fouled by Al Horford on Miami's final possession, then made the second of his two free throws for what became the game-winner. Philadelphia's Tobias Harris had a good look at a corner 3-pointer as time expired, but it bounced off the rim.

That alone was plenty of drama. But there was oodles more.

The end of regulation was wild, with Philadelphia twice



holding five-point leads in the final 1:47 and not being able to finish things off—then Miami missing a box-out that would have won the game in the last second.

With Miami down by two, Butler punched the ball away from Embiid with 12 seconds left in regulation. It went to Herro, who made a 3-pointer with 6.9 ticks remaining to put Miami up one. Another free throw pushed the lead to two, when Richardson went to the line to tie the game.

Mavericks 141, Warriors 121

In San Francisco, Luka Dončić had 31 points, 15 assists and 12 rebounds in his ninth triple-double of the season and the Dallas Mavericks routed the Golden State Warriors.

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 25 points, Kristaps Porzingis had 18 and Seth Curry added 17 off the bench for the Mavericks. They snapped the Warriors' four-game winning streak.

D'Angelo Russell had 30 points and eight 3-pointers in the first half but injured his neck after falling and colliding with Dwight Powell during the third quarter. Russell returned for the start of the fourth, but the Warriors were down by 19 at that point. He finished with 35 points and six assists and shot 13 for 21.

Lakers 128, Trail Blazers 120

In Portland, Kyle Kuzma scored 24 points, LeBron James had 21 points and 16 as-

sists, and Los Angeles Lakers snapped a season-long four-game losing streak.

Kuzma highlighted a strong performance by the Lakers' reserves, who provided 72 bench points. Portland's bench scored 36 points.

Anthony Davis added 20 points and nine rebounds for the Lakers.

Damian Lillard had a game-high 31 points for Portland, which dropped its third straight. Hassan Whiteside had 19 points and 16 rebounds.

Raptors 113, Celtics 97

In Boston, Kyle Lowry scored 30 points, Serge Ibaka had 20 and Toronto snapped the Celtics' five-game winning streak.

Patrick McCaw and Fred VanVleet each added 18 points to help defending champion Toronto avenge a loss on Christmas and send Boston to its second loss in 15 games at home this season.

Kemba Walker led the Celtics with 30 points, and Jaylen Brown had 17.

Playing their first game since losing by 16 to the Celtics on Wednesday -- the first NBA game in Canada on Christmas -- the Raptors never trailed in breaking a two-game losing streak.

Toronto was without two of its top four scorers due to injuries -- Pascal Siakam (groin) and Norman Powell (left shoulder subluxation). The Raptors also were missing center Marc Gasol (left hamstring). All three were injured Dec. 18 at Detroit.

Rockets 108, Nets 98

In Houston, James Harden had 44 points and 10 rebounds and Houston built a big early lead and withstood a late rally from Brooklyn.

Houston has won five of six games, with its only loss coming against Golden State on Christmas.

Russell Westbrook and the Nets' Taurean Prince were both ejected with about 20 seconds to go when they started yelling at each other after Prince fouled Westbrook.

Spencer Dinwiddie led the Nets with 17 points and 11 assists.

Bucks 111, Magic 110

In Milwaukee, Khris Middleton scored 21 points and NBA-leading Milwaukee overcame Giannis Antetokounmpo's absence for the second straight night.

Antetokounmpo, the NBA MVP last season, also missed the Bucks' victory Friday in Atlanta because of back soreness.

Middleton also had seven assists and five rebounds to help the Bucks improve to 29-5 overall and 16-2 at home. Ersan Ilyasova, starting in place of Antetokounmpo, had 17 points and 14 rebounds.

Evan Fournier led Orlando with 23 points.

Nuggets 119, Grizzlies 110

In Denver, Nikola Jokic scored a season-high 31 points and had 10 rebounds and 10 assists for his seventh triple-double of the season and 35th overall, leading the Nuggets past Memphis.

Will Barton added 20 points and Jamal Murray and Mason Plumlee each had 15 to help the Nuggets win for the eighth time in nine games. Jaren Jackson Jr. led Memphis with 20 points.

Bulls 116, Hawks 81

In Chicago, Lauri Markkanen had 25 points, Zach LaVine added 19 and the Bulls nearly led wire-to-wire against short-handed Atlanta.

Battling an illness and questionable until a few hours before the game, Markkanen was 8 for 14 from the field, making 4 of 9 3-pointers. The Bulls have won three of four.

John Collins had 34 points for the NBA-worst Hawks. They have dropped 10 straight for the second time this season.

Pelicans 120, Pacers 98

In New Orleans, Brandon Ingram scored 24 points, Jrue Holiday added 20 and the Pelicans won their third straight.

JJ Redick scored 15 points, and Lonzo Ball added 13 for New Orleans. Aaron Holiday scored 25 points for Indiana.

Knicks 107, Wizards 100

In Washington, Julius Randle scored 30 points and equaled a season high with 16 rebounds, Bobby Portis added 17 points and New York.

It was the Knicks' second straight victory, just the second time this season they've won two straight. Both wins have come on the road. Isaiah

Philadelphia 76ers guard Ben Simmons, center, Miami Heat forwards Derrick Jones Jr., left, and Jimmy Butler, right, battle for the ball during the first half of an NBA game, Saturday, Dec. 28, 2019, in Miami.

Thomas and Jordan McRae each scored 20 points for Washington.

Spurs 136, Pistons 109

In San Antonio, DeMar DeRozan had 29 points, LaMarcus Aldridge added 25 points and 12 rebounds and the Spurs hit a season-high 18 3-pointers.

San Antonio was 18 for 35 from 3-point range, including a career-high five by Aldridge. San Antonio set a season-high with 42 points in the third quarter, fueled by a 25-9 run.

Andre Drummond had 21 points and 18 rebounds for Detroit.

Suns 112, Kings 110

In Sacramento, California, Devin Booker had 32 points and 10 assists and Phoenix held off the Kings to snap an eight-game losing streak.

Kelly Oubre Jr. added 20 points and 16 rebounds, and Ricky Rubio had 21 points and eight assists.

Buddy Hield scored 23 points for Sacramento. The Kings have lost six straight.

Cavaliers 94, Timberwolves 88

In Minneapolis, Darius Garland and Collin Sexton each scored 18 points and Cleveland overcame an NBA season high-tying 29 turnovers to hold off Minnesota.

Tristan Thompson added 12 points and 15 rebounds for the Cavaliers.

Jeff Teague scored 18 points for Minnesota.

Jazz 120, Clippers 107

In Los Angeles, Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points, Jordan Clarkson added 19 points in his second game with his new team, and Utah beat the Clippers.

Clarkson, who was acquired in a trade with the Cleveland Cavaliers on Tuesday, came off the bench to shoot 7 of 13 from the field. The Jazz shot 48.6% from 3-point range to win for the seventh time in eight games.

Kawhi Leonard scored 20 points and Paul George added 19 for the Clippers.

The Jazz scored the last 11 points of the game to seal the victory, holding the Clippers scoreless over the final 3:35. The Clippers made just four field goals in the fourth quarter.

Brady leads NFL All-Time Team QBs



NEW YORK

(AP)—You have first pick for the NFL's All-Time Team's quarterback. The 10 possibilities are Joe Montana, Tom Brady, Johnny Unitas, Otto Graham, Sammy Baugh, John Elway, Peyton Manning, Roger Staubach, Brett Favre and Dan Marino.

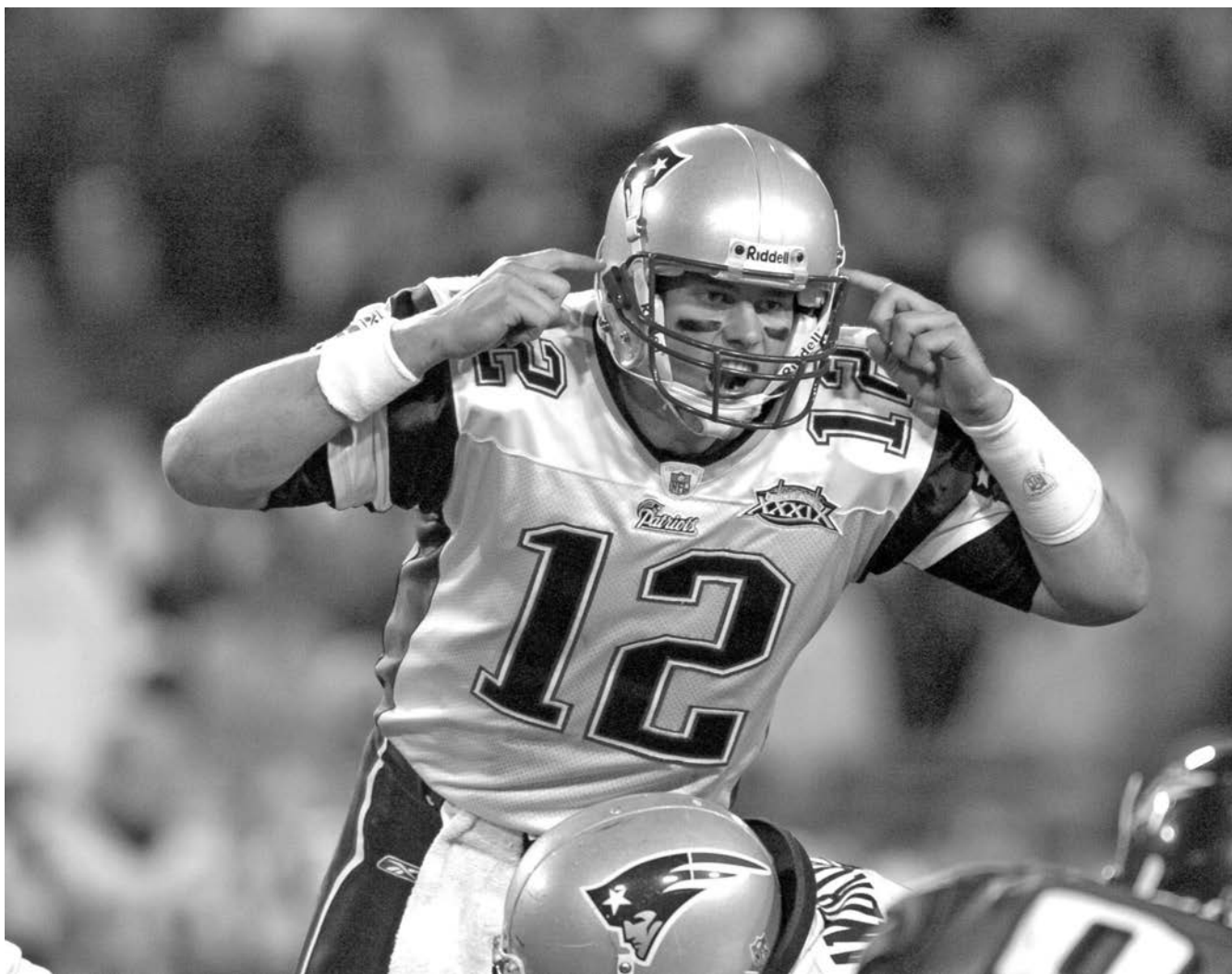
Have fun.

Members of a special panel of 26 selected all of them for the position as part of the NFL's celebration of its 100th season. All won league titles except Marino. All are in the Hall of Fame except Brady and Manning, who are not yet eligible.

On Friday night, quarterback was the final position revealed for the All-Time Team.

Although Graham actually won seven championships—four in the All-America Conference and three in the NFL—Brady owns the most in the NFL with six Super Bowl rings. He's a four-time Super Bowl MVP and a three-time league MVP. The Patriots have won their 11th straight AFC East crown with Brady behind center. At 42, he has yet another chance at a title.

"It is pretty amazing, and



In this undated file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady signals to his teammates during the first half of an NFL game in Foxborough, Mass.

AP

look at all the names and so many of the guys I looked up to over the years that were my idols and heroes," said Brady, who grew up in Northern California rooting for Montana. "I am glad I am still doing it, too."

"Through a lot of help and a lot of support, I just learned and tried to get a little bit better and a little bit better and keep evolving."

Favre also grew up watching the NFL and idolizing another man on the All-Time Team.

"When I was a little kid, I wanted to play pro football. I wanted to be Roger Staubach," Favre said. "That is who I looked up to and who was my favorite player, and he's still my guy. To be able to do exactly what I wanted to do and accomplish so much ... have all the passing records (when he retired)? Are you kidding me?"

Favre is the only player to win three consecutive NFL MVP awards.

"I never thought about Pro Bowls never thought about MVPs," he said. "I envisioned what it would be to run out on the field for Super Bowls. How cool that would be. I got to live that, and everything that has come after. Are you kidding me?"

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

(AP)—Don't tell Sean Payton the Saints' chances of earning a first-round bye in the NFC playoffs are a long shot.

New Orleans' 13th-year coach said his team is preparing to go all out Sunday to beat the Carolina Panthers in the regular-season finale, knowing full well his team still needs some help to earn a bye. That means Payton is planning to play New Orleans' most prominent players as he normally would.

"I don't think this is a long shot, what we need (to happen) this week," Payton said, referring to the possibility of a loss or tie by either San Francisco or Green Bay. "We're full speed ahead, winning this game."

The Saints (12-3) are already NFC South champs for a third straight season and cannot finish any lower than the third seed. But New Orleans wants a first-round bye and could get it with a win, combined with a failure to win by either the Packers, who visit Detroit, or 49ers, who visit Seattle in what also will decide the NFC West champ.

Drew Brees said the Saints view the possibility of a bye as important not only because it would secure a home game in the second round of the playoffs, but also because "you just don't have to play an additional game and have the exposure from that."

"You would hate to lose

Saints could clinch first round bye

somebody by having to play another game" in the playoffs, Brees continued. "Getting that week rest, I feel like, is a huge benefit."

The Saints even could earn the No. 1 overall seed in the NFC, but that would require a win over Carolina and losses or ties by both the 49ers and Packers.

Last year, the Saints couldn't improve their playoff position in Week 17, rested key players and lost at home to a Carolina team that had dropped seven straight games.

"We're treating it much differently than maybe a year ago when we kind of knew where we were," Payton said.

If the Saints lose, they still could get the No. 2 seed, but only if Green Bay wins and San Francisco loses.

The Panthers enter Sunday's game on yet another seven-game skid. Carolina (5-10) doesn't have much to play for other than helping Christian McCaffrey become the third running back in NFL history to post 1,000 yards rushing and receiving in the same season. McCaffrey enters the game needing 67 yards receiving to join Roger Craig and Marshall Faulk in that elite club.

Eli Manning in final NY Giants appearance

In East Rutherford, the man

who has been the face of the New York Giants since 2004 is probably going to make his final appearance for them this weekend.

Eli Manning's 16-year career with New York, in which he helped restore the Giants as a title force in the NFL and led them to two Super Bowl victories, likely will come to an end Sunday. The Giants will try to spoil the Philadelphia Eagles' bid to win the NFC East.

If it is the end, Manning will leave with almost every Giants passing record; two NFL championships; two Super Bowl MVPs; a streak of 210 consecutive starts between 2004-17; a Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award; and the respect of his teammates.

No doubt the last eight years have been tough. New York has made the playoffs once since winning the championship for the 2011 season, and that's taken a toll on his tenure and his prospects for selection to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

That's just the stuff on the surface. To his teammates, friends and coaches, Manning will always be the player's player, a classy, giving guy, a family man and a football intellect who wanted nothing more than to help his team-

mates win games.

What's little known is Manning the prankster, the quiet imp who found a way to get his teammates to laugh.

The pranks are legendary. The No. 1 overall draft pick in 2004—by San Diego before a quick trade to the Giants—would borrow a teammate's cell phone and change the language. He would put a dye in the socks of his offensive linemen that would turn their toes blue for weeks.

Former center Shaun O'Hara made the mistake of getting into a disagreement with his quarterback and found his car coated with petroleum jelly and baby powder. Try to get that off.

Make no mistake, Manning isn't going out the way he would like. First-round pick Daniel Jones will be the starting quarterback Sunday in a game that may decide the division title.

Manning will be standing on the sideline watching, like he has most of the season. He lost his starting role after the second game, although he did write a heartwarming final chapter at home in leading the Giants to a 36-20 win over the Miami Dolphins two weeks ago.

Though disappointed, Manning never hesitated to

help Jones, the No. 6 overall choice in the draft.

"To have a guy like that to work with every day and to learn football, learn how the NFL works, has been . I've been fortunate to be in that position," Jones said. "He's a fun guy to hang out with, he's a fun guy to come to work with; you learn a lot just hanging around him. I've been lucky to be around him."

Bell wants to be part of Jets' future

Le'Veon Bell's return to football hasn't included the big plays and eye-popping statistics that made him one of the most electrifying and productive players in the NFL.

The running back struggled—along with most of the rest of the offense—in his first season with the New York Jets. Still, Bell isn't necessarily looking to find a hole and run to another team in the offseason.

"I wouldn't have signed here for four years if I didn't want to be here four years," he said Friday.

After sitting out last season in a contract dispute with Pittsburgh, Bell joined the Jets as a free agent last March on a \$52.5 million contract that included about \$35 million in guaranteed money. It was an aggressive and popu-

lar move by then-general manager Mike Maccagnan, who envisioned the running back being a dual-threat presence in Adam Gase's offense.

Thing is, there were reports that Gase balked at the Jets spending that much money for a running back. Then it took a while for Bell to get going, with spotty offensive line play and quarterback Sam Darnold missing three games with mononucleosis all contributing. Bell has rushed for 748 yards this season, and his 3.3 average per carry ranks as the lowest of his career.

"The hardest thing about going through Year 1," Gase said, "you're trying to learn not only players, coaches, just kind of what's the right fit for this group."

During the season, Bell approached Gase about using him more in the offense because he believed he could help win games with more touches. He has only had three games this season with 20 or more carries, and two have come in the last two games. Bell also has his two highest rushing totals in those, with 87 on 21 rushes at Baltimore two weeks ago and 72 yards on 25 carries against Pittsburgh last week.

"I think we started finding our rhythm kind of at the end of the year," said Bell, who has 61 catches for 425 yards. "We've still got to figure ourselves out."

Cubs, Braves in talks on Kris Bryant trade



ATLANTA—

The Kris Bryant trade market is still quietly simmering as teams wait on a couple other factors to play out first.

The most important of those may be Bryant's service-time grievance, still undecided heading into 2020. Teams won't offer as much for Bryant if he is under contract for one year as opposed to two.

The other factor that will keep teams waiting is that fellow third baseman Josh Donaldson is still a free agent. Donaldson is a former AL MVP (2015) and is coming off a strong year with the Braves (.900 OPS with 37 home runs), but he's 34 years old. Bryant, who turns 28 on Jan. 4, is less likely to decline than Donaldson in the next couple seasons.

If Donaldson leaves the Braves, they'll have a hole at third base and in the middle of their lineup. They might be willing to trade some of their prized prospects to get Bryant. That's where the latest rumor on the Bryant front comes in.

Paul Crane of Atlanta radio station The Game reported a rather specific request he heard that the Cubs made to the Braves.

"I was told the Cubs showed great interest in the Braves' minor leagues," Crane said. "They've already, I'm told, told the Braves any three of these four and they'll send Kris Bryant. Those four are Ian Anderson, Austin Riley, Drew Waters and Kyle Wright.

"Now obviously there's room for negotiation. That's what they asked for."

The return package for Bryant in the Braves' trade rumor is intriguing. For one, it makes sense that the Cubs would be looking for a prospect-based package. If they're trying to cut payroll, taking big-league salaries in return doesn't make much sense. Plus, the deal could include a third base replacement for Bryant and maybe a couple young arms, which the Cubs desperately need.

Riley, 22, has the most



MLB experience of the bunch, but that's only 80 games. He made his debut in the middle of 2019 and hit .226/.279/.471. He mostly played outfield for the Braves, but did start four games at third base. It's possible he could be the replacement for Bryant if the Cubs believe he

can play there. He's played 435 games at third as a minor-leaguer but moved around the diamond last season.

Waters is the No. 2 ranked prospect in the Braves' system, according to MLB Pipeline. He turns 21 on Monday and has already reached Triple-A. The outfielder put

up modest numbers in 26 games (.271/.336/.374), but had a .847 OPS in Double-A as a 20-year-old to earn that promotion.

Anderson, ranked third in Atlanta's system, and Wright, ranked fourth, are both right-handed pitchers. Anderson, 21, was the third overall pick out of high school in 2016. His 2019 was similar to Waters in that he did well in Double-A to earn a promotion to Triple-A, but struggled there. Anderson posted gaudy strikeout numbers throughout the minors, but his control became an issue in five Triple-A starts. He struck out 25 while walking 18 with a 6.57 ERA in 24.2 innings.

Wright was drafted fifth overall in 2017 and made his big league debut a year later. The 24-year-old Vanderbilt product pitched six innings out of the bullpen in 2018 for the Braves before spending

Chicago Cubs third baseman Kris Bryant catches a ball hit by San Diego Padres' Francisco Mejia during the fourth inning of a baseball game in Chicago, Sunday, July 21, 2019.

most of 2019 in Triple-A as a starter. He had a 4.17 ERA with 116 strikeouts and 35 walks in 112.1 innings. He got rocked with the Braves, though, posting an 8.69 ERA in 19.2 innings.

There's obvious value to all of these prospects, and it's not a surprise to think the Cubs would want a package involving those players (or at least three of them). That said, there are question marks and risks with all of them. Riley is the only one who had unquestioned success in Triple-A and has followed that up in the bigs. The other three have not.

All four are likely to be in the big leagues for some, if not most, of 2020 though. If Theo Epstein and Jed Hoyer think a trade like this extends the team's contention window for the sacrifice of losing one of the team's best players for the next two years, maybe they would pull the trigger.

Either way, we likely won't see a resolution to Bryant rumors until his grievance is settled and Donaldson signs somewhere. And if Donaldson goes back to the Braves, Atlanta won't be in the market for Bryant.

In Toronto, Hyun-Jin Ryu is the ace the Toronto Blue Jays needed to pair with a lineup flush with "baseball royalty."

That's the view agent Scott Boras has of the four-year, \$80 million deal that brought the Korean left-hander north of the border.

Ryu agreed to join the Jays last weekend, then flew in from Korea for an introductory news conference Friday, greeting a live television audience with a wide smile and a few words in each of his new home country's official languages.

"Hello, Canada," Ryu said. "Bonjour. I'm happy to be here and I'm going to make the Toronto Blue Jays proud."

Ryu was 14-5 with a major league-best 2.32 ERA for the Los Angeles Dodgers last season. He started for the National League in his first All-Star Game and finished second in Cy Young Award voting to New York Mets ace Jacob deGrom.

Ryu's is the second-biggest free agent deal in Blue Jays history, trailing only the five-year, \$82 million contract former general manager Alex Anthopoulos gave catcher Russell Martin in November 2014.

"This is the next step in what we feel is a plan to build a sustainable championship team," Blue Jays president Mark Shapiro said.

General manager Ross Atkins praised Ryu for his "insane athleticism" and his ability to get outs with different pitches in all four corners of the strike zone.

"You truly are fun to watch play," Atkins told his new ace.

Toronto needed a dependable starter to stabilize its rotation and help get the most from its crop of young talent, including four sons of former players, a group Boras regards with regal admiration.

"It was very clear from our conversations with Mark that the Blue Jays were willing to move forward and start building a base to complement the young players they have, and advance the royal youth to a level of championship play," Boras said.

Now, Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Bo Bichette, Cavan Biggio and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. have a starter they can rely on to keep them in games.

"We got one of the best pitchers in baseball," manager Charlie Montoyo said. "We're going to have a chance to win every time he takes the mound."

Toronto isn't the first place where Ryu has teamed with with a talented young core.

"When Hyun-Jin played for the Dodgers, you saw this happen with (Corey) Seager, with (Cody) Bellinger," Boras said. "We certainly expect the royal youth of the Blue Jays continues to grow at that pace."

Three or four other teams were in the hunt, Boras said, including the Dodgers, who had "competitive interest" in retaining Ryu. No suitor was more tenacious than Toronto.

"There's not a week that went by that Ross wasn't calling," Boras said.

That persistence made an impact on Ryu.

"Toronto was one that first pursued me, and continued to pursue, and that's why I'm here," he said through a translator.

Ryu is the fourth pitcher to join the Blue Jays so far this offseason. Toronto signed right-hander Tanner Roark to a \$24 million, two-year deal, acquired right-hander Chase Anderson from Milwaukee, and signed Japanese right-hander Shun Yamaguchi from the Yomiuri Giants.

No starter won more than six games for Toronto in 2019, and the rotation ranked 22nd out of 30 teams with a 5.25 ERA. The Blue Jays went 67-95, finishing fourth in the AL East for the third straight season.

No Tiger, Koepka in Tournament of Champions



HAWAII—The Tournament of Champions will have 34 winners from 2019 competing next week at the Plantation Course at Kapalua, but two of last year's most notable winners will be resting at home.

Tiger Woods and Brooks Koepka have opted to skip the opening event of the new year. Woods is fresh off an exhausting and emotional week

in Australia at the Presidents Cup where he captained the U.S. team to a rousing Sunday comeback to take down the Internationals. As for Koepka, he is still rehabbing his left knee he injured at the CJ Cup in October, that led him to withdraw from Woods' Presidents Cup team.

Joining Woods and Koepka as winners who did not commit by Friday's deadline are Shane Lowry, Rory McIlroy, Phil Mickelson, Frances-

co Molinari and Justin Rose.

However, 13 of the top 30 in last year's FedExCup standings are in the field, as are seven of the Top 10 in the current FedExCup standings. In addition, 11 of the top 30 players in the Official World Golf Rankings are in the field as well, including top-10 players Jon Rahm, Justin Thomas, Dustin Johnson, Patrick Cantlay and Xander Schauffele, who is defending his title next week at Kapalua.

Blue Haus, Saimar rout opponents

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

Blue Haus and Saimar Pilot crushed their respective foes in the Masters division games in the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League.

Saimar Pilot hammered Pacific Marine last, 109-73, last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, while Blue Haus walloped Saipan Vegas Thursday, 106-83.

Blue Haus peppered Saipan Vegas with triples to remain undefeated after three games. Saipan is still winless after four matches.

Errol Peredo and Tony Diaz delivered four triples apiece for Blue Haus, while Elmer Esdreton fired six. All three players finished with 20-plus points to help Blue Haus down



Blue Haus' Tony Diaz, right, fakes off the defense of PPG Paint's Ariel Abadilla during an earlier Masters Division game in the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Saipan Vegas. Peredo tallied 29 points, while Diaz and Esdreton chipped in 26 and 23, respectively.

Saipan Vegas kept Blue Haus within striking distance in the first half, as the latter was only ahead by six at half-time, 48-42. Cecilio Bisana and Mico Usi combined for 23 points in the opening half, helping Saipan Vegas remain in contention.

However, Blue Haus widened the gap when the game

resumed with Esdreton drilling four triples, Peredo making three and scoring 14 markers in the third quarter alone, and Diaz and Junar Guiab contributing 7 and 6, respectively, for their 80-64 advantage.

Blue Haus was never threatened after that to notch its third straight win.

Saimar also improved to a 3-0 record after dominating Pacific Marine from start to finish.

Andrew Ashburn towed Saimar to the easy victory after sizzling for a season-high 46 points. He outgunned the entire Pacific Marine crew in the first quarter, 16-8, to lift Saipan to a double-digit lead, 29-8.

Ashburn kept burning the hoops and capped his out-

standing offensive showing with a 14-point performance in the final canto.

Thursday's Game

Blue Haus 106—E. Peredo 29, Diaz 26, Esdreton 23, Guiab 16, R. Peredo 4, Buenabaja 4, Santos 2.

Saipan Vegas 83—Bisana 23, Usi 17, A. Maplas 12, D. Maplas 12, Moises 7, Park 5, Barreto 4, C. Maplas 3.

Scoring by quarters: 17-22, 48-42, 80-64, 106-83.

Saturday's Game

Saimar Pilot 109—Ashburn 46, Dayrit 20, Santos 14, Villarin 13, Tolentino 5, Jinang 3.

Pacific Marine 73—Atinen 25, Isip 16, Calunzag 10, Sevilla 10, Flores 7, Manangan 6.

Scoring by quarters: 29-8, 47-34, 82-61, 109-73.

Jeremiah, Ezekiel win opener in Gen Cup

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

Jeremiah and Ezekiel prevailed in the opening matches in the 2019 Gen Cup Holiday Hoops at the Agape Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Jeremiah played in the curtain-raiser last Dec. 23 and topped Isaiah, 72-57, while Ezekiel downed Daniel in the other match, 87-79.

Emmanuel Cobacha and Silas Xu teamed up in powering Ezekiel to the 8-point win over Daniel as both players made 20-plus points in their first game in the short tournament. Cobacha had a game-high 29 points, while Xu finished with 22.

Cobacha hit four triples and was consistent on offense, giving his best in the last quarter, as he drilled two shots from beyond the arc and fired 13 points. Xu nailed two triples

and made important free throws in the final canto, going 5-for-6 from the stripe.

Kobe Yang also had a productive night for Daniel after posting 28 points. Steven Yang and Bernardino Lopez finished with twin digits too for Daniel, chipping in 19 and 12 markers, respectively.

In the first game, Mark Puno stood out for Jeremiah, as he exploded for 27 points.

David Cai and Nestor Arreza backed him up, contributing 17 and 10 points.

Jeremiah set up the 15-point win after controlling the game early, as it held Isaiah to three field goals in the first quarter.

Only Tony Liang and En Hong Pang scored for Isaiah in the opening frame with the former making 4 points and the latter hitting a triple. Jeremiah, on the other hand,

buried three treys—two from Cai and one from Puno—and drew 6 points from Mark Shao for a 17-7 lead.

Jeremiah kept the upper hand in the next three periods with Puno on target, outgunning Pang, who finished with a team-high 21 markers.

First Game

Jeremiah 72—Puno 27, Cai 17, Arreza 10, Pang 6, Shao 6, Tang 4, Jin 2.

Isaiah 57—Pang 21, Gonzales 10, Formales 8, Chavez 8, Liang 6, Yu 4, Fracia 2.

Scoring by quarters: 17-7, 28-19, 48-38, 72-57.

Second Game

Ezekiel 87—Cobacha 29m Xu 22, Ga. De Leon 11, Zhang 8, Shao 5, Li 4, Nunex 4, Gr. De Leon 3.

Daniel 79—Yang 28, Wang 19, Lopez 12, De Leon 9, Li 3, Buniag 6, Ellama 2.

Scoring by quarters: 29-19, 40-35, 56-58, 87-79.



AGAPE

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various races on island to their regular practices.

"Our students run five times a week after school hours and they are also involved in various sports, so they are physical fit and highly competitive,"

Pang said.

Meanwhile, other teams that made it to the Top 10 overall of last weekend's race were Tamio's Club (1:34:36/Kosuke Sato, Taro Goto, Ayano Braxton, Michiteru Mita, and Nana-ka Watanabe); Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan (1:55:00/Alyona Gersonde, Das Krishnan, Sean

Kim, John Paul Pangelinan, and A.J.); TRAC 2 (1:53:10), Chagi North (1:54:23), and Party on the Truck (1:56:16).

In the solo division, which drew eight runners, R.J. Aquino made it to the finish line and timed in at 1:57:03, while Pipit Ball topped the women's division.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Jack & Company runners head to the finish line of last Saturday's Northern Marianas Athletics Annual Christmas Island Relay at the Last Command Post in Marpi.

TRIUMPHS

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All Set a while before earning the set point, as Missile-toe mounted a late comeback in an attempt to steal the game. Missile-toe scored five straight points capped by En Hong's spike over two All Set blockers. All Set eventually withstood Missile-toe in the opener with Jeff Riman setting up Jericho Castro for a corner kill that crossed over an empty back sideline of their opponents.

With All Set winning the first set and threatening a sweep, Missile-toe, this time in the second set, got off to a good start and was in the lead in the first half of the match before the former forced the



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

All Set's Jericho Castro, third left, bumps the ball while his teammates look on during the second set of their title game against Missile-toe in the 2019 Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament last Saturday at the Agape Multipurpose Gymnasium.

last deadlock in that period, 15-all. Missile-toe then finished off the set with a 10-1 scoring surge to remain in title contention. En Hong wrapped up the second set win by leap-

ing high for an overhand serve and scoring an ace to send the finale to a third set.

In the decider, All Set got the first possession and Castro served. His heave was

too wide over the backline, serving as a bad omen for All Set, as Missile-toe countered with three straight points and seemed in control of the final set before getting a late scare from the former.

With En Hong still hitting those booming spikes, his brother, En Yang, scoring on a couple of tricky placement shots, and the lanky Cai also helping out in the net, Missile-toe built an 11-4 lead in the third set. However, just when people were expecting Missile-toe to cruise to victory, All Set regrouped and moved within one, 12-13. Bryan Chlarson scored All Set's eventual last point, as he deceived En Hong in their battle on the net, going for a tap instead of a spike,

as the latter attempted to block the shot.

After the defensive miscalculation, En Hong answered with a spike that went over Chlarson and Castro, moving Missile-toe one point away from securing the division title. There was a brief exchange after En Hong's shot, delaying Missile-toe's claim to the championship until the way taller Cai engaged Chlarson in a joust and won to close out the finale.

The three-set victory in the title game was Missile-toe's second straight, as it also survived the then unbeaten We Will Deck Your Halls in the semifinals, 19-25, 25-20, 17-15.

Before losing to Missile-toe, We Will Deck Your Halls was unscathed in the pool

play, earning an 8-0 record after beating Scintillating Reindeers, Young and Restless, Silent Knights, and Santa's Helpers twice in the pool play. We Will Deck Your Halls was seeded No. 1 in Pool A and faced Pool B No. 2 finisher Missile-toe in the semis.

Missile-toe, All Set, and Jingle Balls finished pool play with similar 6-2 slates and organizers broke the tie on points system. All Set won the tiebreak and took the No. 1 seed in Pool B, which also had New Kids on the Block and Naughty Santas, while Missile-toe got the last semis ticket. All Set then reached the finals after sweeping Young and Restless in their Final Four showdown, 25-18, 25-19.



Heat rally
past 76ers,
win in
overtime

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Brady leads
NFL All-
Time Team
QBs

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Missile-toe triumphs



By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Missile-toe survived a pair of three-set games in the playoff round to rule the 2019 Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament last Saturday at the Agape Multipurpose Gymnasium.



Missile-toe, which was led by siblings En Yang and En Hong Pang and also had Tychicus Xu, Jason Wang, Dawei Cai, and Mark Puno on its roster, clinched the men's division championship after rallying past All Set in a thrilling finale, 19-25, 25-16, 15-12.

All Set drew first blood in the title game, leading by as much as 10 points in the first set, 24-14. However, it took

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Missile-toe's En Hong Pang, right, spikes the ball over All Set's Bryan Chlarson, left, and Jericho Castro, during the second set of their title game in the 2019 Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament last Saturday at the Agape Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Agape Team A rules Christmas Island Relay

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

As expected, Agape Christian School runners led the finishers list in last Saturday's Northern Marianas Athletics Annual Christmas Island Relay.

Agape Team A was the overall No.1 finisher in the 13.7-mile race from Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi after timing in at 1:25:27. Kobe Yang And Ar-

thur Liang, who were part of the Agape squad that topped last year's event after recording 1:23:35, this time joined forces with Tony Zhang, Ray Qi, and Ivan Li in besting 15 other teams.

Agape Team A won the open division, downing Jack & Company (1:31:50) and Agape Team B (1:33:02). Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel led Jack & Company and teamed up with



Keith Longuski, Traven Quitugua, Gabe Sappa, and Oldie Roligat, while Agape Team B members were Oliver Li, Hansen Li, Simon Shen, Allen Luc, and Emma Pang.

Agape also prevailed in the youth division with Agape Team C reaching the finish line in 1:34:39, nearly 13 minutes ahead of TanHoldings Football Club (1:47:16). Peter Shen, Eason Tang, Caleb Dai,

Alex Liang, and Eunice Yu were the members of Agape Team C, while Kaithlyn Chavez, Taka Borja, Kohtaro Goto, Akira Kadokura, and R.J. Narvaez ran for TanHoldings FC.

Agape runners ruled NMA's season-ending event for the fifth straight time and coach and Agape principal Kok Pang attributed the Torchbearers' consistent strong showing in

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Agape Team A runners celebrate their first place finish in last Saturday's Northern Marianas Athletics Annual Christmas Island Relay at the Last Command Post in Marpi.